THE CONTRIBUTION OF MENTORSHIP TO PERSONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE WESTVILLE CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF KWA-ZULU NATAL

SHAHEEDA ESSACK

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Study Leader: Professor CA Kapp
Co-Study Leader: Professor G. Szell

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DECLARATION

I, THE UNDERSIGNED, HEREBY DECLARE THAT THE WORK CONTAINED IN THIS DISSERTATION IS MY OWN ORIGINAL WORK AND HAS NOT PREVIOUSLY IN ITS ENTIRETY OR IN PART BEEN SUBMITTED AT ANY UNIVERSITY FOR A DEGREE.

7 March 2006

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Date

DEDICATED TO MY LATE NIECE

FAATIMAH ZAHRAA ESSACK

You brought infinite joy into my life

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SUMMARY

The current study is based on the premise that higher education is essentially alienating for most first generation, first year and academically under-prepared university students in higher education. The study further maintains that the experience of alienation can be overcome by implementing a form of peer mentoring system that simultaneously seeks to address personal, social and academic needs. This thesis has five chapters. Chapter One outlined the problem statement in relation to the nature of student experience of higher education and the impact of peer facilitated mentoring on student development, with specific reference to the first year, first generation and academically under-prepared student. An overview of related literature in the area of student experience of higher education and the potential role of peer facilitated mentoring in higher education indicates that peer mentoring serves to give context, meaning, purpose and direction to students, especially to those that are marginalized.

Chapter Two provided an extensive account of peer facilitated mentoring in higher education. The chapter began with a critical analysis of the national plan on the restructuring of higher education in South Africa with reference to socio-economic challenges, its impact on the restructuring of higher education and the subsequent effects of such changes on student personal, social and academic development. Against this background, the subjective, lived and personal experience of the student as framed in the discourse of higher education as being an alienated experience was then presented. The concept of higher education as being an alienated experience for first year, first generation students in a developing society was explained within the theoretical framework espoused by Mann (2000). The theoretical framework on alienation places emphasis on the socio-cultural context, the primacy of discourse, the student as outsider (knowledge, power and insight), the teaching and learning process, the loss of ownership of the learning process and alienation as a strategy for self-preservation. A case is made that student experience of higher education can be one of alienation and that peer facilitated mentoring, as an intervening strategy, can serve to alleviate some of these negative experiences.

The process of peer facilitated mentoring is viewed as a democratic and collaborative response to challenges in teaching and learning in higher education. Mentoring is being widely used in higher education, globally, as a means to address student needs and institutional goals. Peer facilitated mentoring is being gradually introduced into South African higher education, especially at the first year level. The entire gamut of the first year experience of higher education was explored with a conclusion on some of the principles that must inform the first year experience. Inherent in these principles is the common element of co-operative and collaborative learning that must underpin the process of mentoring. In this regard the co-operative model was presented as the basis upon which mentoring must unfold. Upon this model, the macro and micro model of mentoring were viewed as providing both the conceptual and operational framework within which a peer-mentoring programme could be implemented. A detailed discussion is then presented on the following elements: the processes and phases of mentoring, the selection and recruitment of mentors, the selection and recruitment of mentees, the matching of mentors to mentees, benefits of the programmes and the possible weaknesses and drawbacks of the programme. The chapter concluded with a discussion on the significance of evaluating the programme and the manner in which such evaluations could occur.

Chapter Three provided an in-depth account of the research design as regards the evaluation of the programme. Mentors, mentees and faculty co-ordinators formed part of the evaluation process. Questionnaires were implemented to both mentees and faculty co-ordinators. Focus group interviews were conducted with mentors. The sampling frame, selection of questions, analysis of feedback, interpretation of results, the validity and reliability of results were explained and motivated for in the discussion.

Chapter Four presented an in-depth analyses and interpretation of the feedback received from mentees, mentors and faculty co-ordinators. The analyses included both quantitative and qualitative analyses and thematic interpretations. The analyses generated a range of issues that shed light on the level to which the hypothesis could be validated and the conclusions that could be drawn.

The conclusions drawn from the current study are that the first year experience of higher education is neither alienating nor engaging for the first year student and that student experience falls somewhere in the continuum between alienation and engagement. The level of alienating or engaging experiences depends on the nature and context operational at particular moments. At best the first year experience can be said to be a partially broken fragmented experience and that peer facilitated mentoring has the potential to play a mediating and powerful role in ensuring that the needs of both the student and the institution are met. Recommendations made include: ensuring that institutional policy reflects the out-of-class learning experiences, placing the programme within the main academic programme, continuously assessing the needs of first year students, continuously re-establishing the aims, objectives and goals of the programme, developing a specific curriculum for mentoring, taking care to select and train mentors and ensuring that there is supervision, monitoring and assessment of the programme.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie navorsing gaan van die voorveronderstelling uit dat hoër onderwys in sy wese vir die meeste eerstegenerasie-, eerstejaar- en akademies ondervoorbereide universiteitstudente in hoër onderwys vervreemdend is. Die navorsing gaan verder van die standpunt uit dat die gevoel van vervreemding oorkom kan word deur die implementering van 'n ewekniementorstelsel wat daarna streef om die student se persoonlike, sosiale en akademiese behoeftes die hoof te bied. Hierdie proefskrif bestaan uit vyf hoofstukke.

Hoofstuk een beskryf in breë trekke die probleemstelling ten opsigte van die aard van studente se ervaring van hoër onderwys en die impak van eweknie-gefasiliteerde mentorskap op die ontwikkeling van studente, met besondere verwysing na eerstejaar-, eerstegenerasie- en akademies ondervoorbereide studente. 'n Oorsig van verbandhoudende literatuur op die gebied van studente se ervaring van hoër onderwys en die potensiële rol van eweknie-gefasiliteerde mentorskap in hoër onderwys dui daarop dat ewekniementorskap daartoe bydra om aan studente konteks, betekenis, doel en rigting te gee, in die besonder aan dié wat gemarginaliseer is.

Hoofstuk twee gee 'n omvattende beskrywing van eweknie-gefasiliteerde mentorskap in hoër onderwys. Die hoofstuk begin met 'n kritiese analise van die nasionale plan vir die herstrukturering van hoër onderwys in Suid-Afrika met verwysing na sosio-ekonomiese uitdagings, die impak daarvan op die herstrukturering van hoër onderwys en die gevolge van sodanige veranderinge op die student se persoonlike, sosiale en akademiese ontwikkeling. Teen hierdie agtergrond word studente se ervaring van hoër onderwys met betrekking tot die subjektiewe, deurleefde en persoonlike ervaring van studente, soos geformuleer in die diskoers van hoër onderwys as synde 'n vervreemdende ervaring, dan aangebied. Die konsep *hoër onderwys* as 'n vervreemdende ervaring vir eerstejaar-, eerstegenerasiestudente in 'n ontwikkelende samelewing word binne die teoretiese raamwerk soos deur Mann (2000) voorgestaan, verduidelik. Die teoretiese raamwerk rakende vervreemding lê klem op die sosio-kulturele konteks, die voortreflikheid van diskoers, die student as buitestander (kennis, mag en insig), die onderrig- en leerproses,

die verlies van eienaarskap van die leerproses, en vervreemding as 'n strategie vir selfbehoud. Redes word aangevoer vir die feit dat studente se ervaring van hoër onderwys dié van vervreemding kan wees en dat eweknie-gefasiliteerde mentorskap, as 'n intervensiestrategie, daartoe kan bydra om enkele van hierdie negatiewe ervaringe te verlig.

Die proses van eweknie-gefasiliteerde mentorskap word gesien as 'n demokratiese en kollaboratiewe reaksie op uitdagings in onderrig en leer in hoër onderwys. Mentorskap word wêreldwyd algemeen in hoër onderwys gebruik as 'n wyse om aan studente se behoeftes maar ook aan institusionele doelstellings te voldoen. Eweknie-gefasiliteerde mentorskap word geleidelik in hoër onderwys in Suid-Afrika ingevoer, in die besonder op eerstejaarsvlak. Die totale omvang van die eerstejaarservaring van hoër onderwys is ondersoek met 'n gevolgtrekking oor enkele van die beginsels wat die eerstejaarservaring moet inspireer. Inherent in hierdie beginsels is die gemeenskaplike element van koöperatiewe en kollaboratiewe leer wat die proses van mentorskap moet onderstut. In dié verband word die koöperatiewe model aangebied as die basis waarop mentorskap ontplooi moet word. Op grond van hierdie model word die makro- en mikromodel van mentorskap gesien as die verskaffer van sowel die konseptuele as die operasionele raamwerk waarbinne 'n program vir ewekniementors geïmplementeer kan word. Daarna word 'n gedetailleerde bespreking van die volgende elemente aangebied: die prosesse en fases van mentorskap, die seleksie en werwing van mentors, die seleksie en werwing van persone wat gementor word, die afpaar van mentors met diegene wat gementor word, voordele van die programme en die moontlike swakhede en gebreke van die program. Die hoofstuk word afgesluit met 'n bespreking van die belang van evaluering van die program en die wyse waarop sodanige evaluerings sou kon plaasvind.

Hoofstuk drie bied 'n grondige beskrywing van die navorsingsontwerp wat betref die evaluering van die program. Mentors, diegene wat gementor word en fakulteits-koördineerders het deel uitgemaak van die evalueringsproses. Vraelyste is gebruik vir gementordes en vir fakulteitskoördineerders. Fokusgroeponderhoude is met mentors gevoer. Die steekproefraamwerk, seleksie van vrae, analise van die terugvoer,

interpretasie van resultate, asook die geldigheid en betroubaarheid van resultate word in die bespreking verduidelik en gemotiveer.

Hoofstuk vier bied 'n grondige analise en interpretasie van die terugvoer wat van gementordes, mentors en fakulteitskoördineerders ontvang is. Die analises sluit beide kwantitatiewe en kwalitatiewe analises en tematiese interpretasies in. Die analises het verskeie vraagstukke laat ontstaan wat lig gewerp het op die vlak waartoe die hipotese gevalideer kan word en die gevolgtrekkings waartoe gekom kan word.

Die gevolgtrekkings waartoe na aanleiding van hierdie navorsing gekom kan word, is dat die eerstejaarservaring van hoër onderwys nie vir eerstejaarstudente vervreemdend of uitnodigend is nie en dat studente se ervaring op die kontinuum iewers tussen vervreemding en uitnodiging lê. Die vlak van vervreemdende of uitnodigende ervaringe hang af van die aard en konteks wat op 'n besondere tydstip van krag is. In die gunstigste geval kan gesê word dat die eerstejaarservaring 'n gedeeltelik gebroke en gefragmenteerde ervaring is en dat eweknie-gefasiliteerde mentorskap die potensiaal het om 'n bemiddelende en kragtige rol te speel om te verseker dat daar na die behoeftes van studente omgesien word en dat die doelstellings van die instelling bereik word. Aanbevelings wat gemaak word, sluit in: die versekering dat institusionele beleid die leerervaringe buite die klasopset weerspieël, plasing van die program binne die hoof-akademiese program van die instelling, deurlopende assessering van die behoeftes van eerstejaarstudente, voortdurende herbepaling van die doelstellings, oogmerke en mikpunte van die program, die ontwikkeling van 'n spesifieke kurrikulum vir mentorskap, terwyl sorg gedra word met die seleksie en opleiding van mentors en verseker word dat daar toesig, monitering en assessering van die program is.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE STUDY

HBU	:	Historically Black University
HE	:	Higher Education
HWU	:	Historically White University
MEDUNSA	:	Medical University of South Africa
MESAB	:	Mentoring for South African Blacks
SA	:	South Africa
SMP	:	Student Mentorship Programme
SAQA	:	South African Qualifications Authority
UDW	:	University of Durban-Westville
UK	:	United Kingdom
UKZN	:	University of Kwa-Zulu Natal
USA	:	United States of America
UWC	:	University of Western Cape

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

A growing body of literature points to the fact that some students find the first year of university life essentially alienating (Beecham, 2000; Cakwell & Pilkington, 1994: 82-92; Gibbs, 2001: 86; Mann, 2001; Mazibuko, 1999; Rendall, 1994). Alienation is viewed as a sense of separation between the student and higher education – meaning that the space between the student and the institution is fraught with considerable complexities, threatening students' survival on campus. The sense of alienation emanates from a number of sources. These include the structure and functioning of the higher education system, its buildings, its geo-political layout, its complicated administrative system, the highly scientific nature of the curriculum, its diverse and sometimes oppressive cultures, the language, cultural and class barriers and its complex and arcane history (Cakwell & Pilkington, 1994).

In her exposition of alienation in higher education, as it pertains to students, Mann (2001: 8), suggests that:

> "...the student's experience of alienation in higher education is not necessarily inevitable within the higher education context; that critical work must be done in order to examine the conditions which might promote alienation; and that any changes towards eliminating the student's experience of alienation within higher education would be radical and not cosmetic."

Therefore, negative student experiences must be seen to be normal. Attempts should be made to critically examine the factors that give rise to such negativity, while attempts to deal with such issues should be deep and transforming. It must be acknowledged that attempts at addressing the issue of student academic and social development are not necessarily ineffective, nor are they completely wholesome. Much in the daily course of

events on campus suggests a need for creative and innovative practices and approaches to provide students with more meaningful learning experiences.

The high drop out rate of university students is clearly a cause for concern. The Report on the National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa (2001: 30) states that:

> "...about 20% of all undergraduates and postgraduates drop out of the higher education system each year. The average for first-time entering students is 25%. This results in an annual loss to the system of 120 000 students who do not complete their studies".

Gardner (2000) claims that at least 50% of first year dropouts make that decision within the first six weeks.

Hence, the first six weeks are critical in determining whether students will remain in the system or not. It would therefore appear that a student's initial experience of higher education should be more meaningful, purposeful and binding. In this regard, the institution needs to play a far more instrumental and conscious role in facilitating the kind of experience conducive to meaningful student development. This experience, whatever form it takes, must focus on the core of the first year curriculum and incorporate strong elements of collaborative teaching and learning.

In South Africa the higher education system has not necessarily provided the kind of conditions conducive to student academic development. The following examples, as cited by Mazibuko (1999: 15) of highly talented students being lost to the higher education system, serve to highlight the weaknesses within the system in relation to student retention.

a. A student was refused entry to Wits University to do an honours degree on the grounds that he was not sufficiently talented. He went to Saskatchewan, Canada, where he acquired a PhD in Theoretical Nuclear Physics. He now leads a department of Physical Science at a university in the USA.

b. Wits University also refused to allow another student to complete his engineering degree there. He was sent to Britain to continue his studies, and two years later, Mazibuko received a letter from the university in Britain saying what a brilliant student he was.

c. At the University of Zululand, it took a young man in his first year BSc four years to try and do Mathematics, Science, Physics and Chemistry. He never passed any of the subjects. He was not allowed to continue and went to the USA. There he was declared the best Mathematicss student in the State of Georgia, where he is now a professor of Mathematics at the University of Atlanta.

d. Yet another example is that of a doctor who was turned away by all our universities and then went on to become a lecturer at Harvard University" (Mazibuko, 1999: 15).

A group of South Africans went round the world asking exiles and comrades to come home, but they refused, saying that they were happy where they were. There are many examples of our universities failing to recognise the potential and value of our own students. Once they leave South Africa, academic institutions abroad turn them into academic gems, where they go on to become very successful and valuable. Anecdotal as the above examples may appear, they are reason enough to believe that there are severe deficiencies in the system when it comes to the issue of student development and retention. Perhaps the greatest disadvantage that South African black students bring with them when they are confronted with the university system, is that they are largely first generation, first year students from impoverished socio-economic backgrounds. Most of these students also come from educational backgrounds where they have not been sufficiently prepared for the demands and challenges of higher education. This is further exacerbated by the reality that universities are not necessarily equipped to cater for student diversity and individual needs. Many students encounter problems largely because of a lack of understanding of the intricacies and complexities of the higher education system. The above examples highlight the degree to which some of the

universities are deficient in addressing the needs of students. These incidents further illustrate the need for closer collaboration between experienced individuals and junior students. Deficiencies in the system also point toward the need for a personal, close and supervised approach to learning for undergraduate students – for access to the higher education system does not necessarily guarantee academic success. Higher education in South Africa is grappling with the issue of access and equality of opportunity. However, the general experience seems to be that: "The question of equity in higher education stopped at the issue of access; the material ability to progress and successfully exit is also an issue of equality of opportunity" (Cakwell & Pilkington, 1994: 55). There seems to be a wide disjuncture between the higher education system and the needs of the student.

Mann's (2001: 8) argument that "...critical work must be done in order to examine the conditions which might promote alienation ...and that any changes towards eliminating the student's experience of alienation within higher education would be radical and not cosmetic..." forms the basis of this study. Among the numerous efforts made at addressing the problem of student success and retention, the process of peer facilitated mentoring stands out as the most significant, since it permeates all aspects of institutional life (from the academic to the social programme). Mentoring is not a superficial approach to development, but one that has a deep and profound impact on learning. It embraces notions of engagement, debate, critical discussion, close personal interaction and collegiality.

The notion of interpersonal is highlighted in the February 2001 Report on the National Plan for Higher Education. The plan stresses the need for closer interaction between learners and educators. In this regard, the report states:

> "...one of the greatest challenges facing higher education in South Africa is to ensure that it educates and nurtures the next generation of intellectuals and leaders, especially black intellectuals, including professionals and researchers. It is unlikely that this role can be played either by higher education institutions that are narrowly driven by market imperatives or by 'virtual universities'. They cannot replace the traditional contact in higher education institutions where scholarship, research, teaching and service are valued in equal measure, and where the focus falls on the full range and breadth of disciplines. And more importantly, where knowledge generation and intellectual development are

> themselves the product of social interaction and engagement" (National Plan for Higher Education, 2001: 79).

Viewed against the backdrop of the legacies of apartheid education, there is a need to identify mechanisms that would assist not only in rectifying, altering and correcting the skewed impact of apartheid education on learners (mainly black), but also in attaining the goal of nation building.

The closest that universities have come to establishing interactive learning is in the form of tutorials and possibly seminars. However, even the tutorial system is unable to adequately incorporate the various kinds of engaging learning experiences mentioned in the Report of the National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa. Pastoll (1992: 8) states: "There is no substitute for discussion in the learning process, and tutorials are our only means of bringing about discussions in controlled conditions." The researcher wants to go a step further and argue that peer facilitated mentoring goes beyond tutorials in advancing the goals of deep learning. It might be possible that the concept of peer mentoring as an educational tool was not fully developed at the time that Pastoll made this assertion.

The context of this study is located in an institution of higher learning – in this case the Westville campus of the merged University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN) located in Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal, Republic of South Africa. The study is based on a model of student development that seeks to enhance the personal, social and academic abilities of first year students with the aim of increasing success and retention. This is accomplished by providing peer support, peer counselling and peer help in the form of selected senior students mentoring first year students within small groups, and by means of one-on-one counselling. This practice on student development is based on the belief that peers play a significant role in reaching out to junior students facing enormous challenges in their transition and adjustment from school to university. Needless to say, the success of mentoring depends largely on the quality and expertise of the mentor. This being the case, it becomes imperative to recruit, select and train mentors to ensure that the goals of mentoring can be fully realised. The training and development of mentors is meant to

bring out the best in mentors in terms of their abilities to impress upon their mentees and reach out to them in meaningful ways. The ultimate benefit of the training of mentors is manifested not only in the performance of mentees, but also in the holistic development of the mentor. The nature and process of holistic student development as a result of peer facilitated mentoring is a key goal of investigation of this study.

The current study examines the nature of the dynamics between a first year university student's experience of alienation (at all levels of institutional life) and the influence of peer facilitated mentoring on the student's transition and adjustment from school to university. Clearly, the relationship between the two is complex and requires much discussion and analysis in order to arrive at meaningful solutions to student problems in higher education. The problematising of concepts serves to direct and define the basic structure of this study.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study is based on the premise that most students find the first year experience in higher education as essentially alienating. The experience of alienation pertains to almost all aspects of institutional life. The unwanted and negative outcome of this experience is the high dropout and attrition rate among first year students. The Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal is no exception. Several attempts at addressing the issue have been made. These attempts include additional tutorials, increased supplemental instruction, academic development programmes and English second language development programmes. While some attempts have been successful, others have not. Perhaps, one weakness among these attempts was the lack of a unifying element that tied all aspects of student development together. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that attempts at redressing past imbalances are by their very nature limited. Compensating for twelve years of deficient schooling in a space of just six months requires enormous effort.

In an assessment of mentoring among students at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Naidoo (1999: 217) argues:

> "...for the presence of the Student Mentorship Programme (SMP) as an element within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as the SMP's goals of social and academic upliftment dovetails with the stated objectives of the NQF...SMP visibly accounted for the personal development of a large number of the Faculty's mentors and mentees."

In particular, historically black universities in South Africa admit a large number of academically under-prepared students who require additional personal development, social development, academic development and academic enhancement programmes. This is said with some caution, since some may argue that such a view is paternalistic at worst and patronising at best. However, indications are that peer facilitated mentoring in the form of scaffolded support serves to enhance the life-skills, success and retention rates of first-entry students.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research encompasses a series of questions. The current study may not necessarily answer all of these questions. However, questions such as the following need to be acknowledged, since they serve to direct the research:

a. Does the national plan on the restructuring of higher education in South Africa address the needs of first year, first generation students adequately?

b. Presently, most first year black students within the higher education system are first generation students. These students are expected to negotiate with a range of environmental influences. It is therefore essential to understand the factors that determine the kinds of choices students make as to whether they should remain within the higher education system or exit before completion of studies?

c. What is the nature of the first generation, first year student experience of higher education? Are first year students disengaged from the dominant, mainstream

and super-structural forms of a higher education institution? This experience would include the following elements:

- assessing the entire gamut of the academic programme from content, method of instruction, language of instruction, forms of assessment, to the culture of reading/writing/numeracy and communications;
- examining peer support structures, residential life and other formal support mechanisms; and
- gaining an understanding of the culture of an urban setting versus a rural/traditional background.

d. What is the nature of the relationship between student academic under-performance in higher education, secondary schooling, socio-economic background, cultural and linguistic background?

e. Is the higher education curriculum compatible with the needs of second/third and sometimes fourth language speakers? Is the curriculum designed in a way that it promotes deep and meaningful learning? Is higher education as instrumental and operational as Gibbs (2001: 86) and Luckett (2001: 52) claim where "...the SAQA reforms lay the HE curriculum open to the threats of both operationalism/instrumentalism and the marketisation of knowledge", thereby creating a sense of distance and alienation from the learning process preventing "...the fostering of pedagogical relationships that are richer and more challenging than those of producer and consumer" (Luckett, 2001: 53)?

f. Can peer facilitated mentoring play a constructive role in bridging the gap from school to university? Does mentoring have the potential to engage the learner at levels that stimulate and sustain meaningful learning and prepare students for the demands of a sophisticated higher education system?

g. What are the factors that lead to the success of peer facilitated mentoring?

h. Does the process of mentoring lead to the professional development of mentors?

i. What are the benefits, both short-term and long-term, of mentoring in terms of enhancing organisational effectiveness and institutional stability?

j. Does peer facilitated mentoring contribute to student success and retention?

1.4 AIMS OF THE STUDY

While the purpose of the study relates to broader issues, the aims of the study are specific and focus on particular aspects of the research. The aims of the study encompass the following:

a. To provide an analysis of the factors that gave rise to the levels of academic under-preparedness of university students in South Africa, especially previously marginalised (mainly black) students.

b. To present an analysis of factors that contribute toward student alienation in higher education by providing an extensive account of the first year experience at university, its accompanying challenges and the complex needs of first year university students as well as the subsequent need for peer facilitated mentoring. This would include detailing the demands of the mainstream university culture in terms of the conditions under which curriculum, administration and social conditions function and the subsequent need for and potential impact of peer facilitated mentoring on students.

c. To locate the analysis within the theoretical framework of Mann's perspective on student experience of alienation and engagement in higher education.

d. To outline the definitions, process and model/s of peer facilitated mentoring in higher education within the context of the co-operative model of learning.

e. To assess and evaluate the role of peer facilitated mentoring in the institutionalised form of SMP at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN) by:

- evaluating mentors' and mentees' experience of this process on their academic, personal and social development with specific reference to their experience of alienation and engagement;
- evaluating how the mentoring process contributes towards the professional development of mentors;
- assessing whether SMP contributed in any significant way to student success and retention; and
- assessing how SMP contributed towards the effective functioning of the institution.

The above analysis is contextualised within the ecology model of human development espoused by Uri Bronfenbrenner (1993). The strength of the model lies in its potential to explain and analyse, in great depth, the unfolding process of human development in the context of close human interaction.

1.5 THE HYPOTHESES

The current study is based on the following hypotheses:

a. Higher education is essentially an alienating experience for first generation and first year students.

b. Current systems of teaching and learning are unable to deal effectively with such experiences of disengagement and alienation.

c. Peer facilitated mentoring in the form of academic, social and personal mentoring contributes towards the following areas of development:

- ameliorating the first year student's experience of alienation at different levels of institutional life within the higher education system;
- contributing towards enhancing a student's academic, social and personal skills;
- invariably increasing student success and retention at the first year level;
- contributing toward the professional development of mentors; and
- contributing toward strengthening the organisational effectiveness of the institution.

1.6 TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE WORKING DEFINITION OF PEER FACILITATED MENTORING

Homer in the Odyssey chronicled the origin of the concept 'mentor'. Homer tells us that around 1200 B.C. the adventurer Odyssey prepared to leave for the siege of Troy. Before sailing, he appointed a guardian to his household who for the next ten years acted as teacher, adviser, friend and surrogate father to Telemachus, son of Odysseus. The mythical guardian's name was Mentor (Murray, 1991: 7). The Greeks therefore based mentoring relationships on a basic principle of human survival. Humans learn skills, culture and values directly from other humans whom they look up to or admire. The principles of modelling and mentoring have been key elements in the continuity of art, craft and commerce from ancient times. This kind of human closeness allows for the easy and comfortable access to expertise.

There are numerous definitions to mentoring. The following definitions have been selected for the current study. Megginson & Clutterbuck (1997: 13) define mentoring as "...help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking". Hairston (2000: 10) states that:

> "In its simplest form, mentorship is a relationship in which a person with greatest experience or wisdom guides another to a higher level of personal and professional experience...motivates peers and subordinates, maintains discipline, sets and enforce standards, evaluates and fosters teamwork."

Mentoring also has a strategic element. According to Management Mentors (1999: 9) mentoring is "A strategic approach to developing a person (mentee) by pairing him/her with a more experienced staff member (mentor) who will teach, coach, sponsor and encourage the mentee." In addition to being a strategic association, mentoring serves to enhance professionalism, explained by Goodwin & Stevens (1998: 12) as:

> "A professionally centred relationship between two persons (academics, supervisor/student) in which the supervisor/senior academic guides, advises and assists the mentee (student/junior academic) in achieving academic success."

Mentoring is therefore a process of development that occurs between two individuals, a senior and a junior, leading to deep and sustained learning.

As opposed to mentoring, the concept of facilitated mentoring provides a far more holistic understanding of the benefits of such a process. Facilitated mentoring is defined as:

> "...a structure and series of processes designed to create effective mentoring relationships, guide the desired behaviour change of those involved, and evaluate the results of the protégé's, the mentors, and the organisation with the primary purpose of systematically developing the skills and leadership abilities of the less-experienced members of an organisation" (Murray, 1991: 5).

This kind of mentoring is compatible with the needs of undergraduate students who require much direction, leadership and development in understanding of the higher education system.

Peer facilitated mentoring in the context of an academic higher education institution means the pairing of a senior student with a junior student within a similar discipline, from a similar cultural background and with a similar personality disposition. Within the context of this close relationship the specific goals of mentoring are the following:

a. facilitating the transition from school to university through a process of in-depth orientation;

b. raising awareness of the complex and diverse needs of the higher education system through a process of ongoing discussion and engagement;

c. initially providing scaffolded emotional, academic and moral support;

d. assisting the mentee in developing self confidence and self-esteem – essential elements for success in a highly competitive environment;

e. enhancing the mentee's academic skills within specific disciplines;

f. as a result of the bonding process, a closeness develops to the extent that it allows mentors to encourage their mentees to excel academically and socially, thus increasing their chances of success and retention;

g. indirectly contributing towards the professional development of the mentor;

h. indirectly contributing towards the effective functioning of the organisation; and

i. consolidating the process of learning.

1.7 MOTIVATION AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The Student Mentorship Programme at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal was established in 1998. It has been operating since July 1998. However, the programme does not currently exist in the form in which it was implemented. The rationale behind the establishment of the programme is based on the need to assist the increasing number of academically under-prepared students entering the higher education system, and in particular the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. The objective of the programme is to provide first entry students with extensive bridging support aimed at increasing academic success and student retention. While the aim is to assist historically disadvantaged students in coping with the academic and personal

demands of the university, this programme has great potential for growth of students from all kinds of backgrounds – including students who come from privileged educational and economic backgrounds.

In 1999, the peer facilitated mentoring programme at the then University of Durban-Westville integrated with the tutorial system – the aim of which was to deepen the teaching learning process and enhance holistic student development. Mentoring sessions are viewed as an extension of the tutorial process and vice-versa, and they serve to reinforce the development of academic and conceptual discipline-specific skills in the context of small groups that facilitate discussion. The integration and mainstreaming of the two processes (mentoring and tutoring) within the formal academic programme of lectures is discussed in Chapter Two.

The first year student and his/her experience of university occupy a central role in the mentorship programme; hence the need to examine the nature of the programme and its significance for the effective functioning of the institution. The first year college experience (American concept) is a vast and wide field of concern and research among higher education institutions in the United States of America (USA) Gardner (2000: 2). The focus on the first year experience at tertiary institutions in South Africa is not as extensive as that in the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom (UK) – hence the need for the current study. However, the challenges facing first year students across countries are almost the same. In attempting to deal with these challenges, a range of intervention strategies has been implemented. Student-student mentoring, or peer facilitated mentoring, is just one example.

The first official mentoring programme in South Africa was MESAB (Medical Education for South African Blacks) established at Medunsa. This is a non-profit organisation whose goal was to reduce the disparities between whites and non-whites in the incidence of illness and mortality. In 1990, MESAB found that the failure rate of its students very high. Given the high costs involved in training medical doctors the South African National MESAB director recommended peer facilitated mentoring to be implemented on

a voluntary basis to all MESAB students. The positive effects of mentoring cannot be denied. This conclusion has been supported by a study carried out by La Rose (1995: 38) on the effects of mentoring on MESAB students which found that student academic performance and social development was greatly enhanced as a result of peer mentoring. Whereas these results are based on a group of students from a specific discipline the current study aims to evaluate a peer mentor programme across all faculties.

The Student Mentorship Programme has great benefits, not only for the mentee but also for the mentor (Naidoo, 1999: 217). He further motivates for the presence or integration of mentorship into the NQF as the goals of both coincide. He bases this suggestion on the success of SMP in the Faculty of Commerce and Administration at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal where mentors and mentees both demonstrated improved personal and social development. The implications of this for human resource development are profound – hence the inherent potential of SMP in contributing to the professional development of mentors and mentees. Megginson and Clutterbuck (1995: 36) argue that various authors make passing reference to the fact that mentors also learn, with little analysis of *what* and *how* they learn, from the relationship. While this is the subject of ongoing research, mentors seem to gain from their mentees in the following ways: gaining insights into new areas of skills and technology; enjoying an opportunity to evaluate critically the intuitive processes they use; having the benefit of matching experience-based advice against what happens when the mentee follows it; receiving a stimulus to review their own knowledge (and learning) of topics that come up for discussion; and finding clues to hidden issues that their own direct reports will not highlight. The current study aims to identify how mentorship contributes to the professional development of mentors.

Mentoring thus presents itself as a tool for educational development that has immense and endless possibilities for growth and development. Not only does mentoring yield personal and individual benefits, but it is invaluable to the development of the system as well. Pegg (1999) provides the following reasons why organisations should consider implementing a mentoring programme: it is a way for all organisations to improve their

people management skills and to make better use of the diversity of their workforce; it is an easy to be administered strategy which can improve the self-confidence and job competitiveness of designated groups; it is an effective method for the transference of professional, technical and management skills; it focuses on developing employees' skills and potential and can thus enhance the diversity of the workforce to reflect the organisation's client base; and it benefits all concerned – the organisation, the mentee, mentors and other employees – by increasing the skills, flexibility and knowledge of all participating employees. In line with current trends in staff development, mentoring is generally conducted in-house, which is more likely to meet the particular needs of the organisation. To date, there has been very little research on how the peer mentor programme at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal contributes towards enhancing the effectiveness of the organisation, hence the need for the current study.

A strong component of the mentoring process is a Code of Ethics that guides the mentoring process/relationship. Since mentoring is an association that verges onto the personal, the need for confidentiality, trust, respect, understanding, compassion and kindness is essential. In addition to this, other significant areas of focus in mentoring in higher education, that require greater attention, are: developing policies for mentoring within the context of student development issues, addressing issues of diversity, addressing issues of gender differences, addressing issues of language and ethnicity, dealing with gifted learners, providing learners with a range of opportunities to develop their leadership skills, providing an appropriate infra-structure for the programme and evaluation of the mentees, mentors and the programme.

1.8 A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Bill Clinton, ex-President of the United States of America is quoted as saying that: "People who grew up in difficult circumstances and yet are successful have one thing in common; at a critical juncture in their adolescence, they had a positive relationship with a caring adult" (Lewis, 1996: viii). The Greeks based mentoring on a basic principle of

human survival. At the heart of the mentoring process is the issue of caring, compassion and kindness. In a study conducted by Hairston (2000: 31) on officers and senior non-commissioned officers in the American military, mentors are seen to motivate peers and subordinates, maintain discipline, set and enforce standards, evaluate, foster teamwork and perform strong leadership functions. The success of these functions depends largely on the mentor's ability to communicate both verbally and non-verbally in a clear and unambiguous manner. In fact, (Hairston, 2000: 31) states that: "When we fail to properly communicate, the costs can be extremely high."

The Chiron project (Chiron is a symbol of the wise and good teacher in Greek mythology) carried out by Reilly (1992), developed a directory that aimed to increase the chances for young novices to pair themselves with adult experts. What emerged from this process is that certain characteristics among both mentors and mentees were seen to be essential for the success of the mentoring process. The important mentee characteristics can be described as being talented and wanting to extend and develop this talent, curiosity or wonder about ideas/questions/problems, a desire to create something new, exceptional maturity, and an awareness of global and philosophical issues. Important mentor characteristics were described as possessing technical interest in a field of interest to the student, sensitivity to the student's need and expectations, a willingness to devote time to the process of mentoring, possessing good people skills, a willingness to identify problems and solutions and providing constructive evaluation that would nurture the student's growth. Clearly the mentor-mentee relationship is a reciprocal one where mentors give of their time and expertise, and are in turn rewarded by the satisfaction of helping and nurturing young people.

In a study conducted by Frey and Noller (1983), 250 references published between 1962 and 1983 were analysed. The study found that planned mentorship (facilitated or structured mentorship) was a recent phenomenon. They concluded that regardless of whether mentoring relationships were formal or informal, success was dependent on the characteristics of the mentor. The mentor should possess sufficient skills and knowledge, care about the process and have the personal desire and courage to commit to the

affective elements of the relationship. On the other hand, mentees had to exhibit ambition, trust, ability and desire. Those who reached the top always had one or more mentors along the way and they almost always saw the mentoring relationships as essential.

However, mentoring relationships also have their drawbacks. Headley (1999: 61) and Hays and Gerber (1999) warn of the danger of power and its abuse in a mentoring relationship. Headley feels that the issue of power needs to be investigated further. Merriam (1983) cautions that there is a need to clarify the assessment of mentoring before it is advocated as an intervention strategy for career development, adult learning and adult growth and development. Furthermore, there are many complexities that surround the formal matchmaking between mentor and protégé. The disadvantages will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

The mentoring process functions effectively within a planned, structured and facilitated manner. A good mentor programme requires talented leadership, effective co-ordinators, articulate communicators and insightful leaders, and will be able to inspire both mentors and protégés. Since mentoring is a time-consuming process, a high degree of commitment and dedication is required from the leadership (Ellingson, Haeger & Feldhusen, 1986: 5). The effective management, administration and organisation of this process are essential for the success of the micro processes of the one-on-one and group counselling.

1.9 THE PARAMETERS OF THE CURRENT STUDY

The current research focuses only on the effects of peer facilitated mentoring on first year university students across all disciplines at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. However, these results can be generalised to the higher education system across national boundaries. Implicit in this research is the assumption that the entire teaching-learning process can be redirected and redefined from its current position of being classroom-based to one where teaching and learning can occur anywhere, and

outside of the classroom. The philosophy underlying this form of teaching and learning takes the learner as its point of reference.

1.10 STRENGTHS AND SOME LIMITATIONS

The current study has the potential to redirect the teaching and learning process in higher education by bringing it in line with the current thinking on experiential, co-operative and interactive learning. Its emphasis on the first year university experience contributes to current efforts aimed at increasing the success and retention rates of first generation and first year students. This area of research is relatively new, almost under-researched, and therefore of significant educational value. The all-encompassing focus on the first year university experience means the representation of every discipline, from the sciences (mathematics and physics) to the humanities (social sciences and languages) and its particular mentoring requirements. This is aimed at making a considerable contribution to educational development in higher education.

Some of the limitations of the current study are the following:

a. difficulties in narrowing down a topic of this scope;
b. a young and relatively new programme makes generalisations difficult; and
c. the nature of the fieldwork may be time-consuming.

Due consideration should be given to the newness of this area of research in higher education. As such, South African literature on this topic is rather limited. Much of the literature study is drawn from abroad (USA and the UK), where a far more developed system of peer facilitated mentoring already exists. The concepts are often borrowed from industry, given that as a tool for development and learning, mentoring was initially and currently used widely in industry. Many of the generalisations referred to in the literature review derive from studies and research carried out in industry. However, these generalisations lend themselves well to the current study, since not only do these generalisations transcend geographical boundaries, but they are also based on the

universal principles of learning and development. The literature on peer mentoring is more focused on gifted rather than under-prepared learners – hence this study has the potential to make a contribution in the field of educational development in developing societies.

1.11 DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS USED IN THE STUDY

The definitions and descriptions around mentoring are so vast and diverse that it is impossible to arrive at a single definition of the concept as evident in 1.6. Furthermore, the literature on mentoring uses an array of different concepts to describe the process of mentoring. This requires that a list of the varying concepts and their definitions be presented. The following definitions, often found in the literature on mentoring, serve to clarify the conceptual framework of the current study. Concepts that have not been defined here will be defined as they appear in the chapters that follow.

Acceptance and Confirmation: refers to "...personal support" (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 1997: 13) whereby the mentor accepts the mentee in his/her own right and confirms the individual worth and value of the mentee. In this regard, differences in an individual's cultural, economic, social, religious, linguistic and other backgrounds are respected.

Alienation: Alienation is defined as:

> "The literature on alienation suggests two distinct ways of thinking about the concept. The first, as exemplified by the existentialist and the Lacanian psycho-analytic positions, sees the experience of alienation as an inescapable part of the human condition; whereas the second, as exemplified by the Marxist position, sees alienation as a function of social-historical processes and the division of labour within capitalism" (Mann, 2001: 8).

Batho-pele: Batho-pele is a Sotho word meaning "people first". Isisotho is an African language widely spoken in South Africa. In its broader context the government uses the term to promote the idea of nation building and reconstruction and the effective delivery of the public service.

Black: Black includes African, Indian and Coloured as defined in the apartheid political system.

Counselling: Counselling deals with personal issues, which may or may not relate directly to work (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 1997: 13).

Coaching: Coaching is defined as "...helping performance on the job" (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 1997: 13) by directly imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes required for success on the job.

Exposure and Visibility: According to (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 1997: 13), exposure and visibility are defined as 'bringing the learner to other's attention' by introducing him/her to significant others in the environment who could impact on the mentees progress and advancement.

Facilitated Mentoring: Facilitated mentoring:

> "...is a structure and series of processes designed to create effective mentoring relationships, guide the desired behaviour change of those involved, and evaluate the results of the protégé's, the mentors, and the organisation with the primary purpose of systematically developing the skills and leadership abilities of the less-experienced members of an organisation" (Murray, 1991: 5).

Friendship: According to (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 1997: 13), friendship is defined as "...building on the personal dimension of the relationship" and basing it on mutual trust, respect, admiration and loyalty.

Gini co-efficient: The Gini co-efficient is a country's measure of inequality.

Mentee: A mentee is one being mentored to – popular labels include protégé, candidate, apprentice, aspirant, advisee, counselee, trainee and student (Murray and Owen, 1991: 13).

Mentor: La Rose (1998: 3) describes the mentor as a big brother, a big sister, a career counsellor, a problem solver, an idea bouncer, a networker, a facilitator and a walking resource centre. In the context of higher education, the following definition lends itself well to describing who and what a mentor is:

> "...a senior person who facilitates student learning, mediates student experience, is skilled in providing direction and information and is able to encourage students to solve their own problems, while being aware of his/her own skills...chief role of mentor is to demystify academia...boost the student's confidence and self-esteem...help student acquire the necessary academic, research and skills relevant to a particular profession...play a vital role in the process of transforming the dependent student into an independent learner/thinker, who will survive the university process and beyond" (Frame & Kitchen, 1992: 10).

Peers: Peers

> "...are other people in a similar situation to each other who do not have a role in that situation as teacher or expert practitioner. They may have considerable experience and expertise or they may have relatively little. They share the status as fellow learners and they are accepted as such. Most importantly, they do not have power over each other by virtue of their position or responsibilities" (Boud, Ruth & Sampson, 2001: 4).

Role Modelling: Role-modelling is "...demonstrating how to handle themselves in the organisation or the role" (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 1997: 13). Lewis (2001: 59) claims that role models take a number of forms. One form is that of admiration for the position, seniority or achievements of the mentor. The other is the mentor's personal approach or style.

Ubuntu: Ubuntu is an IsiZulu word meaning "humanity". Isizulu is an African language widely spoken in Southern Africa. It belongs to the Nguni group of languages. In its broader context the word is used to symbolise respect for oneself, one's community and one's fellow being. There are deeper levels of meaning depending on what is being conveyed in what context. Its associated meanings are kindness, compassion, caring and social upliftment.

1.12 GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The study comprises five chapters, of which Chapter One provides a general background and context to the current study. This chapter provides the purpose and aims of the study, outlines its assumptions and rationale, and presents a hypothesis forming the core of the examination and analysis of both the literature review and the empirical component. Concepts are defined in this chapter to provide conceptual clarification and facilitate the understanding of the insights gained from related research.

Chapter Two provides a critique of post-apartheid education policy with specific reference to higher education and the implications of the "National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa" and the "Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education", in South Africa for teaching and learning in higher education. Student experience of higher education is located within Sarah Mann's (2001) theoretical framework of alienation in higher education. The study emphasises the first year experience of higher education in a developing society with a focus on the specific challenges faced by students and the institution alike. Between these two moments, the process of peer facilitated learning emerges as a tool for educational development and advancement. The concept, which is based on the principles of cooperative learning, is explored in all its complexities with a view to establishing the kinds of issues that need to be assessed among mentors, mentees and others in terms of relevance and value of peer facilitated mentoring.

Chapter Three outlines the methodological orientation adopted in an attempt to test the hypothesis. The latter overlaps with the goals of evaluation research. Both qualitative and quantitative methods, including participant observation, the questionnaire containing both closed-ended and open-ended questions and focus group interviews, have been implemented. Mentors, mentees and the programme managers represent the focus of the study. The questionnaire constituted the primary means of collecting data from mentees and programme managers, while the focus group interview formed the primary means of collecting data from mentors. Given the researcher's involvement in the peer mentor

programme and the insights gained as a result of this involvement the method of participant observation must of necessity be acknowledged and included in the research design. The analysis has been framed within the ecology model of human development espoused by Bronfenbrenner (1993).

Chapter Four presents an analysis of the above data together with a discussion and review of the literature. The analysis draws on the insights of Bronfenbrenner (1993).

Chapter Five provides a synthesis of the study, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

PEER FACILITATED MENTORING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The social engineering project of apartheid has clearly left its mark on the quality of education for both black and white students. In a complex and rapidly changing environment, higher education faces many daunting challenges in relation to quality, relevance, accountability and maintaining a throughput rate sufficient for sustaining an emerging market in a developing society. At the core of the challenges facing higher education in a post-apartheid era, is the issue of equity and access. This refers to meeting the growing social demand for education (access) and providing opportunities for those who have been previously marginalised (equity) – as far as both national and global goals are concerned. These challenges are the key principles upon which the policy papers, Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (1997), and the Report on the National Plan for Higher Education (2001), in South Africa, were developed post the 1994 elections. Yet, there exists a considerable amount of tension in balancing the needs of both equity and access. This is evident as where universities are forced to struggle with programme offerings, funding, governance and maintaining so-called standards. The tension is felt mostly at the level of filtering these policy decisions into the mainstream of university life – from students' social life to the academic curriculum.

A key argument of this thesis is that despite some successful attempts at addressing the need for equity and access, current systems of teaching and learning in higher education are unable to adequately address the diverse needs of first-generation learners coming from marginalized sectors of society. Both the higher education system and the

marginalized student find themselves trapped in a system where it is not well understood how alignment to each other's needs is to be found in a mutually beneficial manner. While this chapter may argue that higher education still remains a largely alienating experience for most first generation and educationally under-prepared students, the same could be said for lecturing staff as well. The current context of rapid and unprecedented transformation, a problematic and skewed redefinition of the purpose of higher education, the relegation of research into the periphery of academic life and a host of other complex changes have become a source of pain and turmoil for many of the academic and lecturing staff.

The first part of this chapter presents a macro conceptual and theoretical framework containing a discussion on the need for a more collaborative approach to teaching and learning in higher education – a collaborative approach that does not enjoy the recognition it deserves. This theoretical framework begins with a broad outline of the current transformations taking place in higher education in South Africa, with a focus on the critical examination of current policy on education – a policy that aims to regulate and reconfigure the higher education system – and which is based on principles of fairness and justice. The content of this discussion highlights the inequalities and disparities inherent in large parts of the education system, especially with regard to learners from previously marginalized backgrounds. Particular emphasis is placed on the policy goals outlined in the Report on the National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa (1997). Thereafter, the experience of students in higher education – challenges, contradictions and paradoxes – is explained against Sarah Mann's (2001) framework of student experience of alienation in higher education. The analysis of macro policy issues in terms of the national plan is linked to the experience of alienation at the micro level. Mann's (2001) conceptual framework highlights the need for a radical departure from traditional forms of teaching and learning, and moreso for students who come from backgrounds not compatible with the demands of higher education. Peer facilitated mentoring is presented as a possible response, requiring a radical departure from fixed practices, and offering a solution or panacea to some of the challenges faced by students in a developing society in the early stages of democracy. This discussion is meant to

generate a range of questions that serve to contextualise and set the tone for the current study.

The second part of Chapter Two examines the first year experience of higher education students in great detail. The aim of this discussion is to identify some of the challenges experienced by first year students and its implications for student success and retention. Against this background, the priorities that should inform the FYE have been highlighted as a way of facilitating the process or paving the way to dealing with some of the challenges faced by both the institution and students.

The third part of Chapter Two focuses on peer facilitated mentoring in all its dimensions, with a particular focus on its role in higher education. The chapter concludes with a discussion on evaluating the process of mentoring at different levels – a process which is integral to the sustained development of the programme.

2.2 A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONAL PLAN ON THE RESTRUCTURING OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The view is held that post-apartheid South African society carries many of the legacies of its apartheid past and has yet to realise the democratic and egalitarian ideals espoused in the constitution. Blunt (2001:4) argues that the renewal of post-apartheid higher education in South Africa (SA) is steeped in "racial divisions and inequalities". The reality is that opening access to previously disadvantaged groups did not necessarily produce the kind of egalitarian social and educational conditions it aimed to achieve. On the contrary, the basic institutions in society remain unchanged, continuing with unrealistic attempts to match two sets of conditions that have few points of intersection – that of educationally under-prepared, economically disadvantaged and first generation (largely) black students being integrated with a complex higher education system.

These challenges form the thrust of the policy documents produced after the 1994 elections – in particular the Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the

Transformation of Higher Education in South Africa (1997) and the Report on the National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa (2001). While the point of departure in these reports is socio-economic redress, which is perfectly commendable, the challenge lies in the implementation of post-apartheid education policy – from pre-school to higher education. The following discussion highlights just how difficult this is to achieve.

2.2.1 Socio-Economic Challenges

The restructuring of higher education is closely linked to the restructuring of the political and economic landscape of the country. The socio-economic inequalities steeped in South African society are apparent. According to the Human Resources Development Strategy for South Africa (2002:6), its Gini co-efficient of 0.6% makes it the most unequal society after Brazil (0.63%) in the world. The following table provided by the Department of Labour indicates the impact of poverty related issues on the population. Diseases such as HIV-AIDS and other infectious diseases are expected to have a detrimental effect on the economy of the country, with 12.91% of people between the ages of 15 and 49 being infected (Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa, 2002:6). This is also the age group comprising potential university going students. South African society is characterised by a high degree of inequality in terms of race, gender and disability. Given that South Africa is still a developing society, its economic success depends largely on its human resource development. Yet, the AIDS scourge, low life expectancy and high infant mortality pose as severe threats to the country's human resource development strategy – a strategy that depends on higher education and its contribution to developing the country's own human resource needs.

FIGURE 2.1: KEY HUMAN INDICES, 2000

HDI Rank	Country	Life expectancy at birth	People living with AIDS		Under 5 mortality rate	GNP per capita	Population growth rate	
		Years	Total No	Adult rate (% of 15-49 age cohort)	Per thousand live births	(US$) 1998	1975-1998	1998-2015
3	USA	76.7	820 000	0.76	8	29 240	1.0	0.7
4	Australia	78.3	11 000	0.14	5	20 640	1.3	0.9
10	UK	77.2	25 000	0.09	6	21 410	0.2	0.1
61	Malaysia	72	68 000	.62	10	3 670	2.5	1.5
74	Brazil	66.8	580 000	.63	42	4 630	1.9	1.1
103	RSA	54.7	2 900 000	12.91	83	3310	2.0	0.6
128	India	62.6	4 100 000	.82	105	440	2.0	1.2
130	Zimbabwe	44.1	1 500 000	25.84	89	620	2.7	1.0
138	Kenya	52	1 600 000	11.64	117	350	3.3	1.5

Source: Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa: A Nation at Work for a Better Life for All (2002: 6)

Therefore, the challenge for higher education is to reposition itself in a manner that would counter the above social ills, and thereby contribute constructively to building the economy to meet both the national and global demands. This is indeed a daunting task, given the current context of vast global inequalities where "...the world's 885 million adult illiterates who are unable to use the intellectual tools of even the old economy" are expected to function in a "...process of knowledge-sharing unparalleled in human history" (Patel, 2000 as cited at the 88th International Labour Conference). Since the need to develop the economy supersedes every other need, the National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa (2001) takes as its point of departure the economic imperatives of a developing society that aims to redress the imbalances of the past.

2.2.2 The National Plan for Restructuring Higher Education in South Africa

The disparities indicated in Figure 2.1 have far-reaching implications for policies made around issues of education and development. The challenges facing the transformation of the higher education system need to be viewed as part of the broader process of South

the higher education system need to be viewed as part of the broader process of South Africa's political, social and economic transition and reconstruction "...that includes political democratisation, economic reconstruction and development and redistributive social policies aimed at equity" (Government Gazette, 1997:9). The challenges of transformation at the macro level as stated in the Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (1997) includes the following:

a. globalisation and its associated multiple and inter-related changes in social, cultural and economic relations;

b. balancing the need for social redress with the imperatives of the global economy;

c. adapting and adjusting rapidly to the notion of the knowledge society in terms of how people work and consume;

d. closing the gap between the rich and poor – those who benefited economically and socially from the policies of apartheid, and those who suffered as a result of it; and

e. dealing with the contradictions of a sophisticated urban economy existing alongside a peripheral, rural and informal urban economy occupied by the majority of the population.

The implications of these challenges for the transformation of higher education in South Africa, in terms of these policies issues are the following:

a. Increasing participation as a means to overcome the historical pattern of fragmentation, inequality and inefficiency by increasing access for blacks, women, disabled and mature students, and generating new curricula and flexible models of learning and teaching including modes of delivery to accommodate a large and diverse population.

b. Meeting the needs of an increasingly technologically-oriented economy that "...delivers the requisite research, the highly trained people and the knowledge to equip a developing society with the capacity to address national needs and to participate in a rapidly changing and competitive global context" (Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education, 1997).

c. Reconceptualising the relationship between higher education and the state, civil society, stakeholders and among institutions. Co-operation and partnership in governance should create an enabling institutional environment and a culture that is sensitive to and affirms diversity, promotes reconciliation and respect for human life, protects the dignity of individuals from racial and sexual harassment and rejects all forms of violent behaviour.

The report on the National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa (2001:19-21) further refines and consolidates the policy imperatives of the Education White Paper 3 and identifies the following critical issues:

a. The expansion of higher education is necessary in order to adjust to the structural changes in the economy and the associated changes in the labour market trends in the past three decades. While there was a decline of 79% in the demand for the labour of workers with no education, the demand for workers with a tertiary qualification increased by 2028%. There is also an endemic shortage of high-level professional and managerial skills in areas of science and economy such as information technology, engineering, technological occupations, economic and financial occupations, accountancy and related occupations. These are the fields in which demand is likely to be the biggest, yet figures in Figure 2.1 indicate that HIV-AIDS, high infant mortality and low life expectancy are bound to militate against this.

b. These labour market trends indicate that the higher education system needs to produce more graduates and this is clearly not happening. In fact, the

participation rate in higher education has decreased from 17% in 1996 to 15% in 2000.

The above can be attributed partly to the factors identified in Figure 2.1 and the following inefficiencies in relation to the outputs of the system. The average graduation rate remains at 15% between 1993 and 1998. This is in contrast to the 40% participation rate for high-income countries, 20% for middle-income countries and 5% for low-income countries. The total growth in graduates has not kept pace with enrolment growth in higher education. The dropout rate (as already mentioned) is very high. Many students do not re-register, even though they have not completed their studies that results in a loss of R1.3 billion in government subsidies spent on students per year (Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education, 1997). Whereas higher education is viewed as pivotal in developing the country's economic development, the low participation rates of students is definitely a cause for concern.

2.2.3 A Critique of Post-Apartheid Education Policy in Relation to Current Systems of Teaching and Learning

While significant gains have been made with regard to increasing access to higher education for previously marginalized students (working class, black, female, physically challenged), the issue of the success of access versus equity is debatable. It is debatable, because the low throughput rate at universities indicates that universities have possibly not made the necessary and required structural, ideological and attitudinal changes to accommodate the principles and goals outlined in post-apartheid education policy documents. It could also be argued that these goals might be too lofty and unrealisable, and that there is a severe disjuncture between macro policy and what transpires at the micro level. Perhaps universities made some structural adjustments – but the failure of these initiatives must suggest that they were superficial and loosely integrated within the mainstream curriculum in form, content and substance. Nevertheless, research (Sedumedi, 2002) indicates that deficiencies have been found in the arrangement and delivery of aspects of the institutional programme resulting in high failure/attrition

among first-year students. Furthermore, the current system of teaching and learning at universities is unable to adequately meet the demands of first-generation and academically under-prepared students because of its inability to engage learners at levels that require the greatest of attention. The most pertinent levels include the student's affective state, the student's perceptions of what constitutes higher education and the student's historical-cultural background.

Having stated the above, acknowledgement must be given to the role of secondary schooling in preparing students for higher education. It is granted that the broader education system continues to deal with the legacies of apartheid schooling. Yet, the secondary schooling system has been unable to produce and prepare the kinds of students required for the intellectual rigour of higher education. In all fairness to institutions of higher learning and secondary schooling, the role of higher education is as the terms indicate – learning associated with higher levels of thought. The role of higher education cannot, therefore, be reduced to that of secondary schooling or vice-versa. Each sector of the education system has its own mandate, upon which it must deliver within its own defined parameters.

The implications of the above for what transpires at the micro-level of the institution include taking into account the impact of the state's neo-liberal economic policy, the effects of globalisation and the subsequent corporatisation of higher education. This challenges current assumptions of teaching and learning in higher education and calls for reconceptualising the process of teaching and learning in terms of the theoretical underpinnings of product versus process. It also demands the recognition of the ultimate experience of student alienation in higher education, with emphasis on acknowledging the need for collaborative and critical approaches to teaching and learning in higher education.

While the goals outlined in the report on the National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa (2001) are aimed at the redistribution of resources as it pertains to equity and access, the state's economic policy is a neo-liberal one, as it is increasingly being

dominated by a capitalist free-market ideology. While the state makes a clear commitment to equity and redress in all its policy documents (1997, 2001), the state endorses a free-market capitalist economic policy. The effects of adopting these neo-liberal policies have led to large-scale unemployment, retrenchment and a decline in the quality of education – the effects of which are also felt strongly within the higher education system.

Furthermore, the corporatisation of higher education, a direct result of increasing globalisation, must surely work against the interest of equity and access. The unhealthy and unproductive tension between state economic policy and state higher education policy is a contradiction, and one that severely challenges the university's ability to deliver on the mandate of the current government. Swartz (2001:66) is adamant that:

> "This tension between universalising global discourse of knowledge and what is considered to be acceptable knowledge, and the assertion of local identities and knowledge may well become the fault line for political and social contestation that characterises the higher education system in the future. The role of the universities will be to address this tension. On the one hand, universities are being forced to adopt the terminology and nomenclature that makes them acceptable in the eyes of what we call the market. They have to ascribe to what is 'universal' to enjoy the confidence of that eponymous notion of the market, while on the other hand they have to have local and regional relevance."

Universities therefore find themselves in a precarious position where they are required to reconcile contradictory goals of a free market with those of social accountability. The negative implications of these policies affect even the so-called advantaged student. Gibbs (2001:85-94) argues that the commodification of higher education and the subsequent notions of the economic market are "...inadequate to represent the achievements of (even) higher level learners". There is thus a need to acknowledge the distinct discontinuity or break between national priorities and universities in terms of delivery. Some universities are unable (and struggle) to deliver on a range of issues for reasons of incapacity, poor governance, lack of resources, poorly designed curriculum and reduction in state funding.

Given this discontinuity, one begins to question whether there is a need to reconceptualise the fundamentals of the what, why and how of teaching and learning in higher education against the learning needs of first generation university students in a developing society. Rather, and in keeping with the notion of collaborative learning inherent in mentoring relationships, the technicist/scientific/mechanistic view of education is replaced by "...a mechanism that is built on higher education being a conversation by respectful and involved colleagues, who seek to develop educational relationships rather than transactional deals between traders" (Gibbs, 2001:85). This might be difficult to achieve given the set and intransigent manner of academia.

Another challenge to introducing innovative and collaborative approaches is articulated by McKeachie (1994), who warns of the reluctance of higher education institutions to innovate where "...instructors who attempt to revolutionise teaching with new methods or techniques may find that they are only frustrating the needs and expectations their students have developed in the culture of the college" (McKeachie, 1999:4). The (re) conceptualisation of teaching and learning in higher education is invariably influenced by one's understanding of higher education. In this regard, the dominant paradigms on teaching and learning need to be reviewed. There are two dominant views on teaching and learning – one is product oriented (technicist/scientific/mechanical) and the other is process oriented (continuous and developmental). A product-oriented view is in keeping with the principles and values of a free-market capitalist economy, while a process oriented view is in keeping with the principles of engagement and constructive learning whose values are more in synchrony with equality. Depending on the paradigm one chooses, the teaching-learning process will either be static, or one that is creative, innovative and process oriented.

In the context of a developing society and learners who are largely first generation university students, a Euro-centric/scientific curriculum is bound to create greater alienation among students whose previous oppression did not provide the kind of exposure necessary for grappling with the complexities of higher education. Furthermore, the traditional methods of lecturing and tutoring tend to stifle rather than

foster creative and life-long learning. In the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Paulo Freire (1970) argues for a socialist humanist methodology for adult literacy training based on a critical literacy that allowed people to develop skills to understand and change their world. The language used was the one people needed to examine their relation to their world (O' Loughlin, 1999:31). According to Freire (1970, 67) "Here, no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. Men teach each other mediated by the world." This view on teaching is steeped in the philosophy of struggle for liberation at ideological and practical levels. The relevance of this view for the current study is that it has strong elements of critical discourse, critical dialogue and creative learning that places the individual at the centre of the education process rather than at the margins. It is a view that acknowledges the ability and power inherent in oppressed working class people to determine direct and collectively guide their own learning and development.

In attempting to discover alternate views on teaching and learning in higher education, (Bruffee, 1999:xii) suggests that universities and colleges need to redefine their roles according to the following: Firstly, these institutions need to think about themselves not as "...stores of information but as institutions of reacculturation." Secondly, college and university professors are not purveyors of information but "...agents of cultural change who foster reacculturation by marshalling interdependence among student peers." Thirdly, there is a need to review longstanding assumptions about the nature and authority of knowledge. In order to achieve this, collaborative learning that "...marshalls the power of interdependence among peers ...and demonstrably helps students learn better – more thoroughly, more deeply, more efficiently – than learning alone" is essential. Yet, the implementation of this approach poses challenges to the institution, learner and academia.

That the higher education system is unable to maintain its students through to graduation, must in the end suggest that there is a need to give recognition and acknowledgement to the invading presence of student alienation from the mainstream of university life and its associated Euro-centric culture (Beecham, 2000:535-540, Mann, 2000), its impact on student retention, the significance of collaborative approaches to learning and their

immense potential to prevent and counteract the said inefficiencies and wastages in the system. Furthermore, in the discourse of teaching and learning in higher education, it would appear that greater attention needs to be paid to the need for adopting far more creative, critical and innovative responses to issues of attrition and failure. And, perhaps, adopting newer methods with courage and a will to ensuring its success.

2.3 HIGHER EDUCATION – AN ALIENATING EXPERIENCE: SARAH MANN'S THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON STUDENT ALIENATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE (FYE)

A consequence of collective socio-economic, educational and social deprivation for black students is a sense of deep alienation from the most meaningful aspects of a university leading to a range of outcomes – from early drop-out to failure – thereby placing a financial burden on the university and society. The notion of alienation in higher education is explored in all its complexities in the following discussion. Its cause will be traced to student's historical background, the impact of the form and content of the curriculum on the student's psyche, the pervasive social conditions of the university affecting student life and other significant student experiences. Student experience of alienation will be located largely at the first year, since it is at the first year of university that the issue of student success and retention emerges as a challenge. This discussion will attempt to bring together two sets of conditions – the student and his/her life experience and the demands placed on him/her by the university – and to place them side by side, abstracting from them areas that require attention. It is in the space between these two moments that the process of peer facilitated mentoring is presented as a possible alternate, complement and/or supplement to existing teaching-learning practices in higher education.

2.3.1 Mann's Theoretical Framework on Student Experience of Alienation in Higher Education

The concept of alienation is beginning to occupy a visible place in current research on student experience of higher education. While the concept of alienation can be loaded with layers of meaning and not necessarily applicable to most kinds of student experience, it has relevance for the current study, since the concept begins to capture and highlight hidden and covert explanations on the increase in student failure and attrition. In her analysis of student experience of alienation and engagement, Mann (2001:8) states that:

> "The literature on alienation suggests two distinct ways of thinking about the concept. The first, as exemplified by the existentialist and the Lacanian psycho-analytic positions, sees the experience of alienation as inescapably part of the human condition; whereas the second, as exemplified by the Marxist position, sees alienation as a function of social-historical processes and the division of labour within capitalism."

The view has relevance for the current study, since students entering the higher education system are largely working-class students struggling to come to terms with the historical legacy of apartheid, and at the same time grappling with the demands of a highly sophisticated higher education system, at a personal level. She provides a conceptual framework for understanding a student's experience of alienation in higher education by presenting seven different theoretical perspectives on the nature of the dynamics between the student and academia. These perspectives are summed up as follows:

a. **The Postmodern condition** – as the sociocultural context is described as:

> " The shift in education from a search for truth to one of pragmatism, utility, performativity, instrumentalism, efficiency, fulfilling prescribed roles and skills development leads to a student's estrangement …from the possibility of a meaningful personal purpose in engaging in higher education, and from an intrinsic pursuit of knowledge, understanding or justice through education" (Mann, 2001).

Though the emphasis is on the postmodern condition, similar strains can be found in developing societies as well. Further, the technicist and mechanistic approach to learning is deeply embedded in the NQF, which aims to provide a legislative basis upon which

past historical imbalances can be addressed. Given its strong focus on skills development, even at the level of higher education, the philosophy underpinning the NQF promotes the very kind of learning experience that alienates rather than engages students from the most meaningful aspects of learning. It is difficult to establish whether this is an intended or unintended consequence.

b. Positioned as subject/object - the primacy of discourse: This view states that a student entering a higher education system enters a:

> "...pre-existing discoursal world in which they are positioned in various ways (as student, learner, consumer, debtor, consumer etc.), in which more powerful others (lecturers, more experienced students etc.) have greater facility, knowledge and understanding of higher education discursive practices...From this perspective, the student is estranged from the language, culture and practices of the context in which they now find themselves, and is reduced, by their position in the discourse as first year students, to a type rather than to an individual. One could argue that this has the potential to provide the sense of estrangement and disorientation, of invisibility, voicelessness, and ineffectualness, that we can experience when in the position of outsiders in a foreign land" (Mann, 2001:10-11).

In the context of the current study, language can be interpreted in one of two ways. The first is language as being inaccessible since it is coded, couched and framed in unduly difficult texts (verbal and written). The second is language, and its associated meanings, as being inaccessible since it is the student's second or third language. Since language and culture are so closely intertwined, the negative impact on the student's experience of alienation must be even greater. This applies moreso to students who come from working-class and poorly resourced communities and schooling systems.

In the quest for restructuring and transforming the higher education system, tensions have emerged between the need for corporatising higher education with its emphasis on centralising power, profit making and managerialism and the struggle by faculty, professoriate and the larger academic community to retain their academic identity and autonomy. This struggle must clearly have significant consequences for the manner in which students are perceived (by themselves and others) and the attention paid to their needs within the hierarchy of institutional priorities.

c. The student as outsider: knowledge, power and insight: This form of alienation is compared to:

> "... the life of a stranger in a foreign land. Its manifestations are strongest among non-traditional, low income and working class students who see themselves as outsiders and not having ownership over the learning process (Lynch & O'Riordian, 1998:11). Alienation at this level is that the outsider can see deeply, and sees what seems ordered rational and respectable as a veneer. Chaos, disorder and irrationality are the order of the day and life lived by those in the new country is only a dream" (Mann, 2001: 11).

The dilemma facing the outsider is that, "...if they engage in the new land, they risk negating life as it really is, that is, as irrational and chaotic. It is, therefore, best not to engage at all" (Mann, 2001:11). The students are thus estranged from the new land, but also from their own language, culture and desire. "The demands of learning the language of rational, abstract, academic discourse and processes may require the student to repress being non-rational, creative, unconscious and desiring selves, the very selves which they may need for engaging in learning" (Mann, 2001:12). Inherent in this notion is that curriculum is a social process in which the student or learner engages with a set of ideas underpinned by values that are not necessarily compatible with their own, leading to a range of uneasy and uncomfortable outcomes. Against this discomfort, students begin to contest and challenge what curriculum means in subtle and sub-conscious ways. Given that every discipline has its own defined epistemology, the questioning of the curriculum becomes even greater - intertwining epistemology, identity and pedagogy.

d. Bereft of the capacity for creativity - the teaching and learning process: The alienation highlighted here:

> "...is the estrangement of the individual student from their own creative and autonomous self as a learner, replaced by a compliant self unable to access the vitality of their creative self, and acquiescing to the demands and prescriptions of their course requirements" (Mann, 2001:13).

The first year curriculum is deliberately (and perhaps unintentionally) designed to reach out to large numbers of students and in doing so leads to a mechanistic and technicist structure of programme offerings, beginning from content to method of teaching to assessment practices. These principles are further reinforced in the current philosophy

underpinning the NQF. Notwithstanding the fact that the current goals of the NQF has benefits, the inevitable result is that, in the end, a large number of students are reduced to a small number of capable students, thereby eventually assisting employers in the recruitment and selection of the workforce. The difficult choice facing the student is to select between being subservient to a larger political and economic force, or to give free expression to their diverse, radical, unique and varied selves.

e. **Exiled from the self – loss of the ownership of the learning process:** Marx's concept of alienation is used to explain the alienated experience of learning in higher education. It

> "...offers a way of understanding the experience of alienation in higher education as being one of alienation from the product of one's work, from the process of production of that work; from one's self; and from others." From this perspective the learner's estrangement arises out of the unequal distribution of power within the teaching and learning relationship, and the ownership by lecturers of the institution of the means for, and the values given to, work produced through assessment" (Mann, 2001:14).

Some of the continuous struggles facing students include a mass of silent voices in a lecture room, inappropriate channels through which students can express their views, the unending imposition of a foreign curriculum, the constant complaint that most students are 'disadvantaged' (in relation to what?) and the inability to forge a healthy partnership with those that matter the most in academia. The covert silencing of students, in its varied forms, leads to a sense of isolation and a feeling of powerlessness.

f. **Disciplined into docility:** The expression of power through the assessment practices of examinations and confessions "...produce the modern individual adapted to current forms of economic production" (Mann, 2001). Assessment practices locate students in particular hierarchies of success and expertise with failure leading to an extreme from of alienation "...from the product and processes of one's work, from one's sense of self and from others" (Mann, 2001:15). The values that guide assessment practices find clear resonance with the values that drive the work force in a capitalist economy. First, both are driven by aggressive competition and quantitative gain (symbols and numbers). Second, there is a focus on the individual rather than on the

collective (how common are group assessment practices?). Third, the winner takes most and the loser is left at the mercy of institutional power holders (senate and faculty board).

g. Leave me alone – alienation as a strategy for self-preservation: This response among students who experience higher education as an alienated experience refers to a condition where students begin to shy away from the mainstream of academic life. Mann (2001:16) states that:

> "Learning has the potential to trouble, to offer a glimpse into chaos and disorder, and into the unknown. In many ways, it is much safer not to engage in it at all, but to stay in the ordered world in which desire is repressed, and which can be preserved by approaching the new from a superficial perspective…By 'not thinking', the sense of self is not threatened, safety is maintained and unity is preserved. The cost is desire and vitality. For Lacan, the constructed self (as opposed to the natural) derives from the Imaginary and the Symbolic, and he argues that the sense of self derives not from within, but from a constant play of reflected images of 'me' and how others see 'me'. Alienation is thus inevitable, since we search for the illusion of completeness and of wholeness in order to preserve ourselves against the chaotic, and yet this is only an illusion. One strategy for holding on to stability and wholeness may be to distance ourselves from what may be dis-ordering (the student from learning). Since the Symbolic is potentially threatening, as it affords no closure, then from the student's point of view, it is not surprising that it may be best to engage with it from a distance, as if one were separate or estranged from it. In this way, the illusion of a sense of self can be preserved" (Mann, 2001).

The significance of the concepts of reflected images, constructed self and the Imaginary realm is that it points to the presence of the need for closure, which the Imaginary world cannot provide. Such closure is seen as a necessary pre-condition for healthy psycho-social development. Clearly, in the student's search for affirmation and acceptance, the Symbolic plays a significant role. All forms of intervention, including peer facilitated mentoring, fall into the Symbolic realm since it incorporates the language, culture, religion, traditions, habits, humour and social background of the student. Such forms of intervention have the potential to counter and address the very issues on alienation as they have been raised above and must in the end serve to ensure that both the student and the institution begin to engage meaningfully with each other in a manner that allows them to come into their own.

Cohen and Taylor (1976) as cited in (Mann, 2001) concur with the above and argue that there is tension between reality work and identity work – the former is fulfilling the life plan already set out, and the latter searches for who one is in relation to the reality. The tension arises when the identity given as a student does not fit with who a student wants to be and thus seeks ways to escape it through fantasy, imagination, relocation and new forms of behaviour. The following narrative by a student, at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal serves to illustrate the tension that can exist between a student's identity in relation to the notion of what constitutes higher learning. The narrative is significant since it reflects the theoretical constructs on alienation developed by (Mann, 2001) and provides evidence from the local context in support for the theory.

2.3.2 Narrative on Student Experience of Alienation

The theoretical framework of student experience of alienation in higher education is largely developed on the experience of minority and academically under-prepared students in a developed First World country. While this may have relevance for students in developing countries, it does not necessarily capture the essence of students experiencing alienation in developing societies. Furthermore, amid the various explanations and theoretical underpinnings, a weakness may be that others, not the student, make student experience of alienation intelligible. The interpretations of the other can be patronising and intrusive, not always reflecting the true lived experience of the student. And interpretations are infused with ideas of subjectivity, bias and interspersed with the other's view of what is correct and incorrect. In working towards alleviating the student's experience of alienation in higher education, a diverse understanding rather than an intellectual and academic analysis is required. In this regard, the feelings, views and personal observation of 'the student' must be acknowledged in order to further enhance an understanding of this complex phenomenon. From a narrative by a sixth year student, Nolwazi Mpulwana, studying for a four year degree in Speech and Hearing Therapy at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, and told to Ruth Beecham (2000:535-540) who later wrote about it in an article titled 'The Monster of Professional Power', it was evident that issues on alienation

and disengagement are not specific to white campuses only. This type of experience is prevalent even on a predominantly Black campus where the values underpinning the curriculum and the manner in which it is purveyed is Euro-centric.

The narrative is part of a post-graduate narrative research study aimed at revealing how a black student experiences her professional university training. Ruth, a professional therapist and an ex-teacher in the Department narrates the story. For the purpose of the current study, only extracts will be selected to highlight salient issues. The extract reads as follows:

> "However, to counter the problems is this oneness with others, and the sharing through speaking and acting that eases the silent aloneness of suffering. This is our helping of others...We all help. We all need to help. It is part of us. It is within us, and we should do this freely. I cannot set principles upon this helping...If I set principles on the act of helping, then I would set principles upon my humanness. I would set up divisions in my mind that would separate me from others. ...I took what you said as the truth. I did not know then what I know now, that your training separates one person from another; that the way you have been taught divides the client from the therapist; the student from the teacher; the students from each other; and speech from hearing. For a long time I could not understand why you turned people into objects, turned 'sympathy' into 'empathy' and speech into 'science'. I could not understand how the way you think could have caused you to treat Black students differently or to have caused you to be so ungenuine in your own communication with us. However, I do understand it now...I am sorry to say this, but I believe the reason you have made this great division is because you do not want to help. This western thinking of yours is not concerned with being one with all others. It is concerned with you; with what you need, with your place, and with your space...However, this failing also gives you great power over me and has kept me silent until now, the same way it has kept the many Black students silent through the years of their failure....I understand it now, and because of this I feel a little better...I am still caught in your unpredictable and confused tail. Perhaps, though, this unpredictability will work for me this time, and that with the monster's fear of the politics of the Country, all that will happen is that the monster will be embarrassed for itself by me seeing and speaking of it... Either way, though, it will not help me. Because in seeing and understanding the monster, I have had to ask myself if I want to be part of it. In understanding what it is that lies between me and the helping of another person to communicate better, of the principles you have placed on the sharing of our humanness in this thing called therapy, I find the losing of my identity too big a price to pay. I don't want to be a tasty coconut. I don't want to be a part of your monster. I truly do not...Yet I want this degree...just to show you...So I will act for you and, as long ago advised, I will pretend not to see the racism of your actions and the racism of your thinking...I will get this degree, but

> I won't be part of this monster. I will not make him stronger by practising your divided ideas about helping. I will not be a therapist. Truly, what I have learnt from your training is that I don't want to be one – not the way you teach it" (Beecham, 2000:535-540).

The researcher acknowledges that the above quotation is long. However, it is the researcher's view that shortening the quotation will compromise the true meaning and message of the narrative. The narrative highlights many difficult issues – issues that need to be fore-grounded in attempts to redesign the teaching and learning environment as it pertains to non-traditional marginalised students. These issues are difficult to grapple with for both the student and the institution. The first and most difficult aspect to deal with is one that can be referred to as the 'clash of cultures, belief systems and values'. Clearly, the higher education system is Euro-centric. In endorsing an Euro-centric worldview, is there no possibility that two very distinct cultures, belief systems and value systems can be brought together in a manner that does not compromise either one and leads to the desired goals of social and economic progress? Secondly, the issue of power seems central to non-traditional student's experience of alienation. Power as in the unequal emphasis on the needs and correctness of western culture – its norms, values, traditions, conceptions of what is meant by acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and its manifestations on how knowledge is conceptualised. Invariably, the powerful (academia, professors, administrators) have an excessive claim on what is desirable and undesirable knowledge - the content and canon of disciplines. Can courses be designed and implemented in a manner that creates space for the inclusion of other non-traditional forms of knowledge – knowledge that grants students a sense of themselves, their worth and their identity? Thirdly, linked to the issue of power is the issue of access. Fundamental to both access and power is the role of language – language as in the medium of instruction and the language of learning outside and inside the classroom. While English is the lingua franca, should not academia acknowledge its pervasive influence on student academic development and give voice to student diversity by reflecting it in everyday curriculum practices in both formal and non-formal ways? Fourthly, is there such a phenomenon such as an 'alienated experience of higher education'? Is the latter an exaggeration of student experience especially for those who

have experienced repeated failure and for those students who come from diverse backgrounds? Do academics working with marginalized students feel just as alienated? And if so, can this fragmented experience be addressed in a way that is beneficial to both the academic and the student?

The researcher acknowledges that there is a strong (and perhaps biased) emphasis on student experience as being one of alienation and estrangement: foreign, unnatural powerless. Yet, poor student success and retention figures indicate that the higher education system is unable to successfully bond, adhere and cohere its students to itself, thereby forcing a contemplation on the possible causes – and alienation is one such possible cause. Accepting this cause "...requires us to consider the extent to which the alienations described are inevitable or changeable, and our power to influence this" (Mann, 2001:17). Our power to influence these changes becomes apparent in the following discussion.

On the basis of ongoing feedback received from students at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal and research in progress, the above forms of alienation in higher education manifest themselves sequentially in the following manner and are largely located around the first year experience.

2.3.3 The First Year Experience (FYE) in Higher Education

Students' first year of university is beginning to occupy an increasingly important place in much of the literature around student success and retention in higher education. It is gaining prominence due to the high failure and attrition rates in higher education, its implications for the institution's financial viability and for the complexities surrounding the first year academic programme. In the three years of co-ordinating the peer mentoring programme at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, the researcher conducted systematic research on student needs, student behaviour and student attitudes. The following is a brief summary of some of the key findings. It is located

around three important areas: the university environment, support structures on campus and the curriculum (issues around teaching and learning).

a. The university environment

Feedback received from students indicates that they are initially overwhelmed when they first enter the university. The place, people, language and culture are inaccessible. Their first impression is that a university is a large mass of impersonal buildings that are often difficult to locate. The university officials not only speak and write a foreign language, but the manner of their instructions and directions are not always comprehensible. The culture that some students come from is largely of an oral tradition. The manner of communicating is different from what they are accustomed to at home and at school – all of which is accessible.

The greatest dilemma for some first generation first year students is that they do not necessarily possess an understanding of what constitutes a university. Their understanding is limited to the point where they know that an education is important. The rest is foreign to them. Problems relate to career choices. Their parents have never had the benefit of a university education and were therefore unable to guide them appropriately. The career counsellor doesn't always understand the intricacies and complexities of their needs, aspirations, fears, anxieties and weaknesses. An added burden is financial support. The ethos and culture of the university is not something they are accustomed or socialised into. At best it is uncomfortable and at worst it is alienating. This assessment is largely reflected in Mann's (2001) experience of alienation in higher education.

Their greatest challenge is to make the transition from school to university as quickly as possible. Yet, adjusting to the demands of a new environment is impossible if developmental and bridging mechanisms are not in place. It is at this stage that peer facilitated mentoring begins to play the most significant role in bringing the system and the student towards each other in a mutually beneficial manner. This process is referred

to as the orientation phase – the orientation process provides a rite of passage for students from school to university via the peer mentoring system. By all accounts, the peer mentor programme is a short-term but high impact programme.

b. Student support systems within the university

Student support systems are those that provide personal, social and cultural development. Even if these systems are fully functioning, areas of student development are left untapped, simply because recourse to these systems is not compulsory. Often students are unaware of existing resources, the association is not sustained and ongoing, the bond is not always personal, students do not have the option to decide on who they would like to work with and the focus is not always student-centred.

Even when and if students derive assistance from these structures, the peer mentor plays a central and developmental role by constantly encouraging and motivating his/her mentee to rise above the challenges, go forward and have courage. Much is achieved at the level of peers counselling each other and linking each other to significant units on campus, such as the financial aid bureau, the residences, the university administration and other resources. Often the different parts of the system are loosely integrated and the level of fragmentation serves to confuse students rather than simplify issues. Many students find the system problematic, largely because of a lack of understanding of the intricacies and complexities of the system and the absence of close personal support from someone from a similar background who can play an enabling role.

c. Issues of teaching and learning – attempting a definition of teaching and learning in higher education

By far the greatest weakness in the system is that there is no defined, single purpose to the first year academic programme. Challenges facing first year students include the following: difficulty mastering the discipline, being taught in a foreign language, the geographical distance of examples used to explain concepts, the foreignness of humour

employed to illustrate the absurdities and contradictions in events and happenings, the static academic progamme and the method of delivery. The complexities around the academic programme makes a case for greater involvement, engagement and participation between the learner and the lecturer. Therefore, peer facilitated mentoring can serve to actively and meaningfully bring the academic needs of higher education into alignment with the needs of students. This point is further elaborated against the weaknesses that show up in the current academic programme as it exists in most higher education institutions in South Africa. The academic programme as it stands at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal can be described as follows.

Currently most students are expected to attend 4 lectures a week – 3 hours; 1 tutorial – 45 minutes (if it is offered); a practical or laboratory session for Science and Engineering students – hours; and 5 mentoring sessions – 5 hours. The total formal contact time that a student has with the academic programme amounts to approximately 3 hours and 45 minutes per week for non-Science & Engineering students, and 15 hours and 45 minutes for Science & Engineering students. There is no contact with students beyond the formal contact time and this is exactly where most of the attrition and dropout problems emerge. Left to their own devices, students are bound to place greater emphasis on non-academic work, thereby severely hampering their academic performance. The challenge is to exercise more influence on students during times when they are more susceptible and vulnerable to negative external influences.

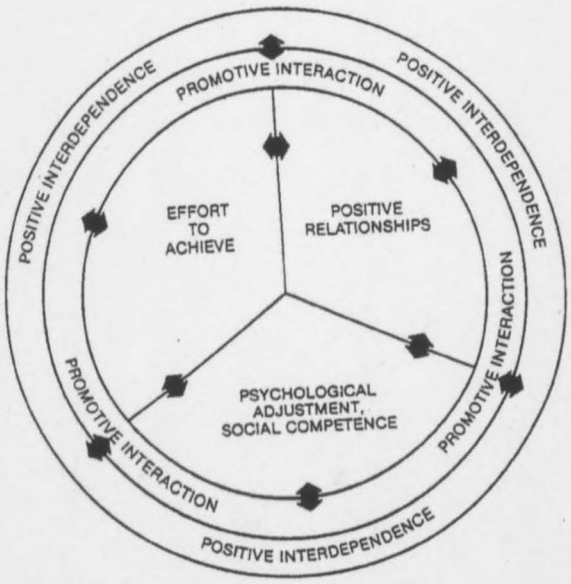
Collaborative and co-operative learning, in the form of peer facilitated mentoring, serves to bring the academic needs of higher education into alignment with the needs of students in an active and meaningful manner. Johnson, Johnson & Smith (1991:27) pose the question "What is the most effective method of teaching?" (in higher education). The response is that it depends on the goal, the students, the content and the teacher. They go further and claim that the next best answer to the question is, "Students teaching other students." There is abundant evidence that peer teaching is extremely effective for a wide range of goals, content and teaching methods (McKeachie et al. 1986:63; Boud, Cohen &

Sampson, 2001:177) in higher education. The core principles of co-operative learning are but one feature of peer facilitated mentoring. Defined as:

> "...working together to achieve shared goals...individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and to all other members of the group. Co-operative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximise their own and each other's learning" (Johnson, et al. 1991: 27).

Reframing and/or redefining the process of teaching and learning in higher education must account for the weaknesses in the traditional and popular forms of delivery (lecturing and tutoring). This process of redefinition must acknowledge the relevance of co-operative and collaborative approaches to the practice of teaching and learning in higher education, especially at the entry level. Figure 2.2 is a model of co-operative learning.

FIGURE 2.2: OUTCOMES OF COOPERATION



(Johnson, et al 1991:27)

The outcomes of co-operative learning (Figure 2.2) are similar to those of peer facilitated mentoring, especially when mentoring takes place in small groups, creating positive interdependence, promoting interaction, fostering an effort to achieve, striving towards developing positive relationships and promoting psychological adjustment and social competence. Clearly, these goals cannot be fully achieved through the traditional forms of teaching (lectures and tutorials). Practitioners in higher education need to begin to

question current practices of teaching and learning in relation to student academic development, as well as the impact of their academic influence on students, the impact of institutional culture on holistic student development and the nature of engagement between the students and themselves. The sooner the process of questioning begins, the sooner the desired changes in academic practice can be implemented. Accordingly, the sooner the implementation occurs, especially at first year level, the sooner the desired changes in student success and retention will become visible.

It must be accepted that once an institution accepts students into its domain (for whatever reason), the institution is obliged to provide students with opportunities and possibilities to maximise their growth and realise their potential. The issue of being disadvantaged – linguistically and otherwise – thus becomes peripheral to the reasons we attribute to student failure and attrition. Many would recall their first year experience at university as a critical developmental stage in their lives – succeeding in the first year at university meant having a successful career. The opposite can be said for failure. At the core of the concerns around the first year experience is the issue of the planning, organisation and implementation of the first year academic programme. Gardner (2000) argues that the organisation of the first year does not make sense from the point of view of promoting student success, and the structure of the first year is largely geared to the convenience and needs of educators in charge. He draws a further shocking and startling conclusion, namely that the first year is structured for a generation of an economy-of- scale – to yield revenues to fund upper level courses. This might be true; but clearly in the mist of higher education planning and administration, it is a difficult claim to prove.

In the writings of Astin (1975), Boyer (1987), Gardner (2000), Martin & Arendale (1992), Pascarella & Terenzini (1991) and Tinto (1993), numerous challenges around the FYE have been identified. The following stand out as the most distinct:

a. The relatively low priority or low status of the first year, resulting in insufficient attention being paid to the foundation of the undergraduate experience. Orientation is given a low status function, relegated to junior professionals and

often lacking in faculty involvement. Under-prepared students are recruited without providing them with adequate support. Academic advising prior to enrolment is inadequate. Students are allowed to take courses for which they are not prepared, while little attention is paid to diagnostic assessment and placement in remedial courses if necessary (Gardner, 2000).

b. Teaching, and especially the teaching of first year students, is low status activity. First year classes are often large, and taught by the least experienced and most marginalised instructors, such as graduate assistants and tutors. The culture assumes that new students know how to study and that they understand the culture of higher education. Nothing could be further from the truth. Testing and feedback are infrequent.

c. The important skill of writing is segregated in low status courses with little effort in writing across the curriculum – and little opportunity for writing, speaking, active learning in first-year courses (Gardner, 2000). Courses are presented superficially and focus on memory or rote learning. This leads to boredom resulting in high failure and/or attrition. Inadequate attention is paid to the development of critical thinking skills due to the overemphasis on memorising. There is insufficient exposure to the library and its uses, as well as to research skills and other information retrieval sources. Important areas of knowledge affecting student retention are not included in the formal curriculum – such as health, computer literacy and library skills. There is an artificial separation of the curriculum and the co-curriculum, and therefore of academic and student affairs colleagues. Little effort is made to connect the first year curriculum and co-curriculum to the institutional mission statement. Insufficient attention is paid to issues around residential life. Therefore these facilities are abandoned in favour of non-academic pursuits, with little or no involvement from academic staff.

d. There is little opportunity for staff/student interaction outside the classroom, accounting for a major impediment to retention. The allegiance of academic staff

is primarily to the discipline, not to a particular campus, while there is a concomitant 50-year trend in declining academic staff involvement in out-of-class activities in counselling and advising students. Moreover, the first year offers few common requirements, rituals and experiences, making sense of community, student affiliation, bonding and loyalty more difficult.

e. The isolation and detachment of the university from the school lead to insufficient interaction between academics from various disciplines and secondary schools.

Clearly the FYE in higher education must be set apart from the second, third and subsequent years in terms of needs, focus, form and character. The needs of first year students as opposed to senior students are specific and different. An understanding of the FYE has to account for the past experience of students and its potential role in contributing to success and retention. As such, the FYE occupies an integral place in the higher education system and should be framed by a set of principles and guidelines to inform both macro and micro attempts at dealing with student needs. In this regard, the basis of the FYE is identified around the following principles.

2.3.4 Principles of the First Year Experience (FYE) in Higher Education

First year students in higher education have distinct needs, challenges and priorities. These needs converge with the nature of the institution, its structure and functioning. At the point of convergence, a new set of challenges emerges, all of which require that the FYE be built around specific guidelines, rules and principles. The principles identified should not only resonate with the institution's policy on academic and social development, but also take into cognisance the changing needs of first year students. The principles that guide and frame policy around the FYE need to account for 3 factors:

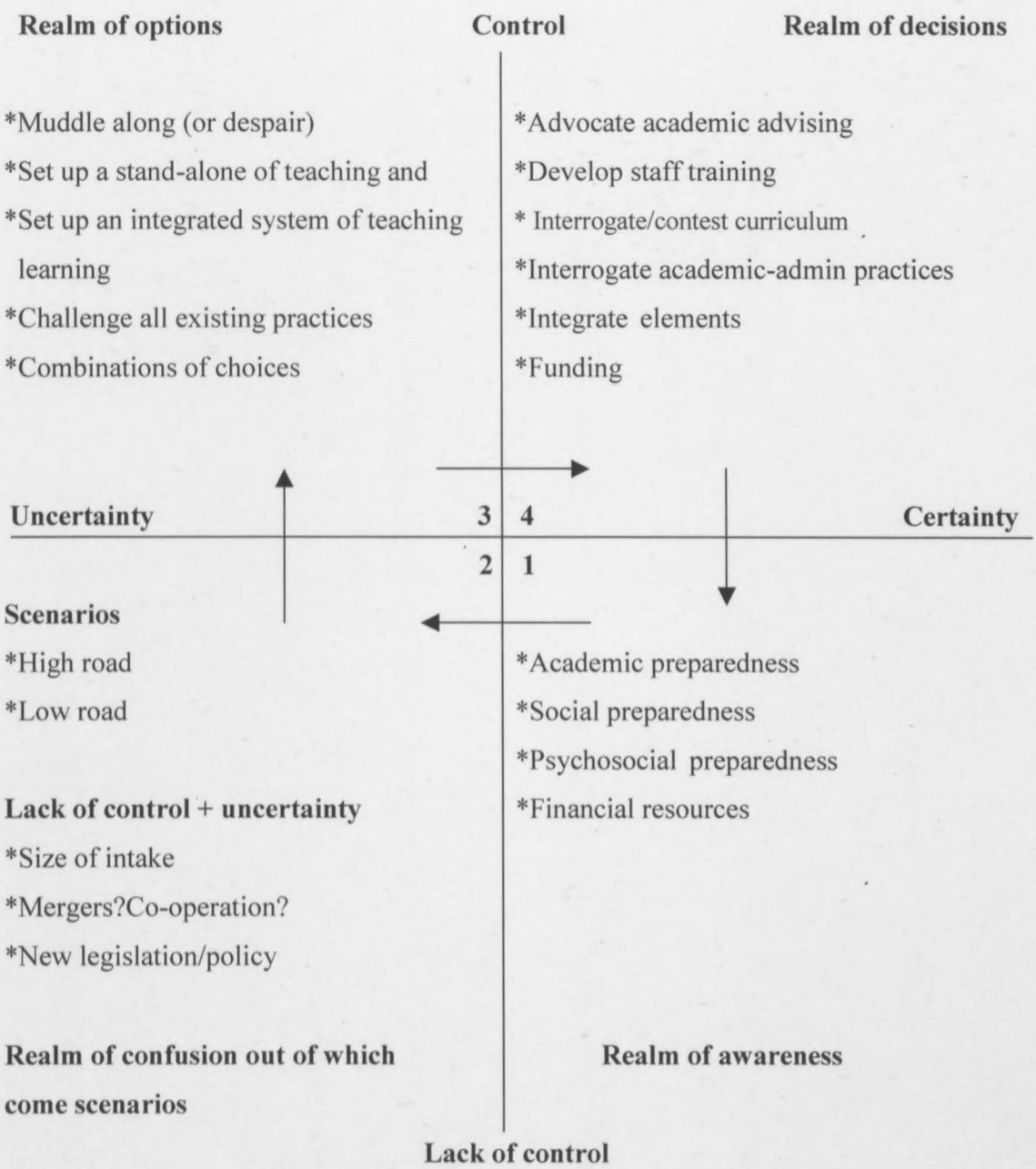
a. Students' academic and socio-cultural background and their specific needs.

b. The process by which the higher education system is brought into alignment with the needs of students.

c. The institution's mission and vision in relation to country's policy of equity and access.

At a workshop on academic advising for first year students held at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal in November 2001, several issues around student academic development for first year students were identified as essential for student success. John Butler Adam presented a summary of the major themes and ideas that emerged out of the workshop in the form of a matrix (Refer to Figure 2.3) from which the principles around the FYE are largely derived. A key feature of the discussion was the institution's lack of control over student behaviour – a consequence of which is failure and attrition (Essack, 2001; Essack, 2003: 20). Combined with institutional uncertainty, a lack of control can have dangerous consequences for student success. However, as specific givens or certainties do exist, the institution is able to effect changes in a manner that student behaviour is influenced positively. It was accepted that, due to the current state of affairs at the institution, there was a high degree of uncertainty. This was evident in the separate operation of key functions such as teaching/learning and student support systems. Yet, knowing both the nature of the challenges and the possibilities available to deal with them, the institution should be able to effect positive changes by establishing systems of academic advising and staff training, and by interrogating curriculum/academic/administration practices, integrating various elements and addressing the issue of funding. Furthermore, it was acknowledged that factors such as the proposed merger, the size of intake and the effects of new policy and legislation on the institution would create a degree of uncertainty, since these factors are beyond the institution's control.

FIGURE 2.3: CONTROL AND CERTAINTY VERSUS LACK OF CONTROL AND UNCERTAINTY



(Sunter & Ilbury, 2001)

On the basis of the above presentation, and after analysing the literature on the FYE as espoused by the authors, Astin (1975), Boyer (1987), Gardner (2000), Martin & Arendale (1992), Pascarella & Terenzini (1991) and Tinto (1993), the following principles of student retention have been identified. These principles are:

a. **The first year is a critical, transitional and transformational stage of development from school to university, and as such the organisation of the university must serve to enhance this stage of development.**

While there are clear macro and micro uncertainties, the institution, by virtue of knowing its students' needs and having control over policy and resources, has the power to effect infra structural and other changes in a manner that harnesses the positive energies of all first year students. The first year of college or university is critical since it lays the foundation (academic, personal and social) of everything that follows. Academic and social integration are the bedrock, which should inform the design of the first year experience (Tinto, 1993; Pascarrella & Terenzini, 1991).

b. **Student diversity requires a diversity of treatment and programme approaches.**

First year students have many faces and cannot all be treated the same, which means that there is thus a need for different programme approaches. The complexities around retention account for the fact that there are no immediate and simplistic solutions, one solution does not hold good for all situations, and the task is never competed, since the first year is a process and a by-product, not a goal in itself. The positive aspect is that most attrition is preventable in so far as it lies within the institution's control. While diversity implies uncertainty, a measure of certainty can be achieved through the innovative implementation of developmental programmes and approaches – interventions over which the institution wields control. These approaches include the following:

- **Early warning alert system**

Given that most students make the decision to drop out within the first six months, it is important to identify potentially high-risk students and goalless, listless students as early as possible. At a very early stage some mechanism needs to inform the institution as to where the problem lies. The concept of front loading (Upcraft & Gardner, 1984) requires that the greater part of meaningful effective learning takes place early on and en masse.

- Orientation

Orientation provides a rite of passage from school to university. As such Gardner (1986: 266) states: "...orientation represents a deliberately designed attempt to provide a rite of passage in which students are supported, welcomed, celebrated, and ultimately (hopefully) assimilated." There is an expectation that this assimilation will be sustained and enduring.

- Involvement

Astin (1975) refers to the need for greater involvement with students in terms of time, energy and commitment directed to on-campus student activities, and he claims that "joiners are stayers". The notion of involvement implies that students are viewed and treated as serious participants in the higher education system.

c. The formalising of intervention approaches – The FYE cannot be treated as purely a mechanism for screening the academically able from the academically disable

Students get lost in the system largely because they are 'ignored'. Formal approaches such as the freshman seminar, a seminar for first year students, cannot be under-estimated. The first year seminar should provide students with an opportunity for being initiated into the mainstream of academic life in a semi-formal and semi-structured manner. As a seminar it carries more weight in terms of relevance, and it can be either credit bearing or non-credit bearing. A key function of the first year seminar would be to incorporate the teaching of learning/study skills pertaining to learning in higher

education. In addition to the first year seminar, more substantial "involvement and control" over student activities should be established by means of other types of institutional initiatives such as academic advising, closer monitoring and measures of accountability for both students and lecturers.

d. Intervention approaches need to be collaborative, co-operative, purposeful, developmental and learner-centred.

Traditional methods of teaching and learning need to be reviewed in the context of student needs and the availability of successful innovative approaches. A departure from outdated notions of "I teach" and "you learn" is required. This approach would place the student at the centre of the teaching and learning process. The following issues are crucial:

- **Critical role of academic advising and early career planning**

The area of advising students in relation to the academic demands of the university plays a crucial role alongside other approaches. In this regard, the selection and training of advisors (be they peer mentors or faculty advisors) determine students' level of engagement with the core aspects of the academic programme. The initial focus should clearly be on career planning and choice of courses. The issue of rewarding and evaluating student performance needs to be visible and enjoy high priority, as it contributes towards increasing student motivation – a requirement for student success. The planning, organisation and administration of such services need to be designed against models of centralised or decentralised systems, as student services permeate all aspects of university life.

- **The concept of the significant other**

The "significant other" symbolises a successful person who takes a keen interest in the development of the student and represents, for the student, all that is worthwhile, valuable and desirable. The significant other is someone that the student aspires to emulate (Gardner, 2000).

- **The Pygmalion effect**

If you believe something to be true, it is true in its consequences for you – a sociological concept (Thomas, 1984). The power of making positive predictions cannot be under-estimated for aspirant students trying to succeed against all odds. In this regard, student development activities should be visible, calculated, planned, deliberate and obtrusive – in a positive, developmental and constructive manner.

e. Integration of all units on campus - An enabling environment

The academic and social integration of students is seen to extend beyond the formal teaching and learning process. Student success and retention can be drastically increased by means of increased interaction between academic staff and students outside of class, through support, study groups and supplemental instruction.

Given that holistic student development entails personal, social and academic development, it becomes essential to ensure a greater synergy and partnership between academic departments and student affairs departments. This inclusiveness integrates all resources and services, contributing to the development of a unified first year programme that cuts across all aspects of campus life.

f. Building a sense of community

Not only is there a need to focus on individual learners in their own right, but also to create a sense of community, belonging, identity and purpose (Boyer, 1987). Students who identify strongly with the institutional ethos, the purpose of higher education and education in general, and who cherish a long-term view of nation building, are bound to remain on campus longer than students who do not share this outlook on life.

g. Retention vis a vis part-time employment, financial assistance and money management

Higher education is expensive and financial concerns can channel much of the individual's creative time away from academic work. Teaching students about money management is providing them with a life-long skill, which is to be developed as early as

possible. Furthermore, providing students with part-time work on campus allows them to free their creative energies and get more involved in their work, instead of being preoccupied with financial worries. In addition, it teaches them responsibility and prepares them for employment in the real world. Strategies for initiating student financial aid are imperative for every campus.

Summarily, the first year experience is challenging for both students and the institution. The first year student experience is seen to be alienating for most students, and in particular for first generation and first year students in developing societies (Beecham, 2000). Mann (2001:17) argues: "...it may be useful to reframe how we view the student's experience of learning in higher education, from a focus on surface/strategic/deep approaches to learning, to a focus on alienated or engaged experiences of learning." The seven perspectives she presents shed light on the different ways in which we might understand an alienated experience of learning, and how it might arise. Mann (2001) further claims that:

> "Such perspectives require us to consider carefully our own role in the potentially alienated experience of our students. They draw our attention to the current context of our teaching and learning processes; to the nature of our discourse; to the images, experiences and voices we may repress through it; to the nature of our relationship with students, to the possibilities we give for play, and to the capacity and power we have through our own knowledge and expertise to reduce and exclude the student's capacity for creative engagement; to the potential heavy hand of our assessment practices in the delicate world of the student's self; and to the complexity, uncertainty and threat of the learning process itself. Above all, we need to be alert to our own positional power, and the complex relations of power that exist within the educational and teaching/learning processes...Each perspective requires us to consider the extent to which the alienations described are inevitable or are changeable, and our power to influence this."

She argues for a radical departure from traditional forms of teaching and learning in higher education and posits five responses to the experience of alienation.

a. The first is **solidarity** where:

> "...we can empathise with, and open up conversations about, the conditions we lecturers and students find ourselves in: our current post-modern performative condition, our negotiation of reality and identity, our positioning into particular subject positions through discourse. We can attempt to

dissolve the estrangement we experience through the separation we make between 'them', the students, and 'us', the academics" (Mann, 2001).

b. The second is **hospitality** which requires:

"We can remember to welcome new members of our community and to help them feel at home, as we would any visitor or stranger to our own home. Metaphorically, we can provide shelter and nourishment, maps, recommendations for good places to visit, and translations and explanations of strange customs and language" (Mann, 2001).

c. The third is **safety** whereby:

"...providing safe spaces in which students are accepted and respected, and in which unformed, ambiguous, non-rational, illogical, unclear ideas, expressions and play are welcomed and listened to, we can nurture creativity, the desire to learn, and the coming to voice" (Mann, 2001).

d. The fourth is **redistribution of power** that requires examining:

"...where in our current practice we make decisions that inhibit the students' own control of their learning process, and where and how, especially in our assessment practices, we exert power over the developing selves of our students. We, thus, need to find ways in which we can redistribute power in the educational process in such a way that students can exercise power over their own learning and development" (Mann, 2001).

e. The fifth response is **criticality** where it seems:

"...that a crucial way out of the experience of alienation, both for ourselves and for our students, is the development of the capacity to become aware of the conditions in which we work, and of the responses we make to them. Such awareness, and the capacity to act on that awareness, must arise out of criticality – the capacity and opportunity to question, examine, uncover, reframe, make visible and interpret."

Barnett (1997:171-172) argues, it is "critical energy – the will on the part of students to invest themselves in their engagements with thinking, self and action – that we need to inspire." Such a will to criticality on the part of students can be enabled through the responses of solidarity, hospitality, safety and the redistribution of power. These responses are further seen as strategies towards a teaching and learning relationship based on an ethical position – using the criterion of justice as a value in education, rather than the criteria of either truth or performativity. It is the value of justice that is central to the

development of post-apartheid educational policy in South Africa. And, as Mann (2001:18) argues: "The shift to such a position, particularly where it is most lacking within undergraduate teaching, would be radical indeed." However, Mann (2001) does not go beyond these five responses in providing an institutionalised way in which these responses could be realised.

The question begs, is there a strategy, mechanism or teaching method that has the potential to include and embrace all of the five responses that Mann presents as possible solutions to the problem of student alienation? How can one ensure student engagement rather than alienation in teaching and learning in higher education in an all-inclusive approach? Are our institutions prepared – psychologically, intellectually, emotionally and socially – for implementing such drastic changes in teaching and learning? The following discussion explores the strategy of peer facilitated mentoring as a possible alternative to traditional forms of teaching and learning and one that has the potential to incorporate the five (and hopefully other) responses identified by Mann (2001).

The discussion in 2.4 examines the multifaceted nature of peer facilitated mentoring and locates its relevance for teaching and learning in higher education. The discussion incorporates notions of collaborative, co-operative and critical learning.

2.4 PEER FACILITATED MENTORING IN HIGHER EDUCATION – A DEMOCRATIC AND COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES AROUND TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Section 2.4 provides some insight as to how students enter and participate in the higher education system. This is followed by presenting a discussion on peer mentoring in the context of South Africa, models of mentoring in higher education, the process/phases of mentoring, selection/recruitment of mentors/mentees, matching mentors to mentees, benefits and weaknesses to mentoring and the need to evaluate the programme. In the discussion, mentoring is understood in terms of the definition provided by Frame & Kitchen (1992: 10) in 1.11.

The Greeks based mentoring on a basic principle of human survival. As a strategy for survival, mentoring has been widely used in industry, nursing, health sciences, the legal field and related professions. Its potential for use as a strategy for survival in higher education is widely recognised for its ability to facilitate the transition not only from school to university, but also from adolescence to early adulthood. Levinson (1978) discusses four major tasks in the period of early adult transition: forming the dream and giving it a place in life, forming the mentor relationship, forming an occupation and forming love relationships, love and family. He claims that while the dream appears to be vague, imaginary, visionary and unattainable, it is the mentor who helps the young adult realise the dream.

The decision of young people to go into higher education is not straightforward (Connor, 2001:204). Many factors influence a student's decision to pursue higher education studies. These include geographical accessibility, parental attitudes, lack of information about recruitment practices in higher education, cost of studying, having access to information, having access to funding, role-models in their secondary schools, perceptions of debt and knowledge about the intricacies of the higher education system. While there have been mass levels of participation in higher education it was not accompanied by a:

> "...significant reduction in participation between social class groups...The reason for this persisting pattern of unequal participation – whether they be structural, cultural or individual – find their expression in the lower average achievement and retention rates of young people from lower social-class backgrounds" (Connor, 2001:204).

In terms of the policy goals of increasing access and equity, it can be concluded that an increasing number of students enrolled at universities and technikons in South Africa are drawn from educational and economically impoverished backgrounds.

While social class is a basis for determining higher educational success, ethnicity may also play a contributory role. McLean (1995:58) claims that recent research shows that Black graduates (African, Caribbean and Asian) are twice as likely to be unemployed as their White counterparts in the USA, are more to be highly qualified, make more

applications before obtaining interviews and feel that employers do not value their experiences. When discrimination is added, their stress and isolation increase. McLean (1995:58-62) claims that the mentor scheme in undergraduate education noted significant improvements in the attitudes towards and on the part of Black and Asian students. Based on a study on mentoring opportunities for undergraduate students in preparation for life in an increasingly diverse society, Scisney-Matlock & Matlock, (2001:83) conclude that often, though not always, student campus experiences are affected by race, ethnicity and gender. Since higher education is a microcosm of society at large, many of the issues involving social justice, diversity and merit are at work on campus. Therefore, the institution can, through both formal and informal mentoring, assist students in navigating through the system.

The questions at this stage appear to be: Given the above challenges facing first-year university students, what survival skills do these students require in order to survive the challenges of a sophisticated higher education system? Are they sufficiently equipped to survive? If not, what measures can be put in place to address this gap between prior student experience and their readiness for the academic and other demands of a university? Could peer facilitated mentoring be a possible answer to all these questions as attested by ex-President Bill Clinton and many others? What is it about the mentoring process that makes it so appealing to some people and unappealing to others? What is the value of peer facilitated mentoring as an educational and developmental tool? In response to the above questions, the researcher would like to present a brief summary of peer facilitated mentoring in higher education.

2.4.1 Peer Facilitated Mentoring in Higher Education in South Africa

The above discussion focuses on the teaching, learning personal and social needs of students in the USA and the UK. Developing countries largely emulate practices and trends in higher education in First World developed countries. This blind imitation and adoption of tried and tested practices abroad gives rise to a number of tensions. One area of discontent is the issue of what constitutes legitimate knowledge in the era of

globalisation and the implications thereof for curriculum practice in developing societies. In a keynote address, Professor Derrick Swartz (Swartz, 2001) asserts that the notion of globalisation suggests a logic of equalisation, of universality and that everything must conform to a set of norms. He argues that:

> "This supposedly scientific discourse dictates what are publicly acceptable praxis and knowledge and what not. It's a form of enunciating a new truth regime, a kind of dogma of what is acceptable in the public imagination. On the other hand, we need to fight for the ground... the domain of public contestation and protest, on which to assert particularity, assert local and regional identity...in the context of globalisation, surely there must be a space for interpreting, advancing and promoting local and indigenous cultures, for modes of behaviour and modes of regulation that follow those behaviours that speak to and advance the interest of local people and local communities."

As with the Greeks, many indigenous societies depend on mentoring (whether they refer to it as such or not), as a tool for socialising the young adult into adulthood. Sons spend time with their fathers or elder members of their group to learn specific skills, roles, norms, values, etc. Girls spend time with the women folk who impart the knowledge, skills and attitudes of being a good daughter, sister, wife and mother.

While much of the literature on mentoring comes from the West, the concept of mentoring itself is not new to the local context. In traditional indigenous societies where teaching and learning are not text-based, informal mentoring between fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, sisters and sisters and so on is the norm. The challenge is to be able to sift through the information and take what is most suited to our context.

The following discussion focuses on mentoring at three institutions in South Africa, the Medical University for South Africans (MEDUNSA), the University of Western Cape and the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. These are the universities where peer facilitated mentoring appears to have been most visible and where efforts are most concentrated. These universities also happen to be historically black universities (HBUs) in South Africa. Given their geographical and historical location, these studies speak to the learning needs of students in a developing society and specifically to students in South Africa.

La Rose (1995:4) states that many of the Black students entering the medical schools in South Africa have similar deficiencies to Black, Hispanic and native American students: poor secondary schooling, negative attitudes towards schooling and their own negative perception of the system into which they are being drawn. As a black medical student at Harvard Medical School and other universities in the USA, his experience of mentor programmes has been very positive. Mentoring programmes at South African universities have their roots in the medical schools and the health science disciplines (occupational therapy, nursing, physiotherapy, optometry, speech and hearing therapy and dentistry). These programmes were later extended to other faculties at other universities.

The earliest record of a South African university offering peer facilitated mentoring is Medical University for South Africans (MEDUNSA). An organisation called MESAB (Medical Education for South African Blacks), founded by Joy and Herb Kaiser, two Americans who lived in South Africa, was set up to mobilise private support for training black South African health professionals. It provides aid to over 700 students in 16 South African universities in Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Dentistry. In 1990 the organisation noted that the failure rate for MESAB students was very high. Given the high costs involved in training doctors, a mentorship programme was instituted and offered on a voluntary basis to all MESAB students (La Rose, 1995:1). Feedback from their mentees indicated that they benefited academically and socially from their mentors.

Students entering medical school appeared to have deficiencies in the following areas:

a. They did not know the material they were assumed to know.
b. Many students believed that they were having problems with the materials in the class when in reality the problem was one of inadequate background.
c. Many faculties were spending time in class or with individual students explaining "basic" concepts and terms.

d. Many faculties were experiencing difficulties in dealing with the highly heterogeneous student backgrounds. The issue of diversity and its associated challenges emerge in much of the literature as a trend in higher education.

e. Deficiencies identified tended to involve low-order cognitive skills and functioning.

f. These deficiencies can be remedied by the use of carefully designed instructional materials.

g. The use of such instructional material was of value even to students not demonstrating deficiencies (Slotnick, 1981 as cited in La Rose, 1995: 3-4).

While these deficiencies have been identified among science students, they are not different from learning deficiencies identified among students in the humanities, commerce and legal disciplines as the following study indicates.

Mahatey, Kagee and Naidoo (1994:101-123) provide insight on the learning needs of students at the University of Western Cape (UWC) – a historically black university in South Africa – and the impact of their peer mento programme on student development. These first year students are drawn from all disciplines at the university. They identify six assumptions about the nature of learning and the learning needs of first year students at UWC.

a. Students need to develop "deep-level" cognitive skills. Apartheid education has left a legacy of learning that is reliant on surface level learning, leading to a poor understanding of the content of disciplines. University level courses require deep level cognitive skills such as being able to conceptualise, critically evaluate and engage in abstract thinking. Poor secondary schooling has resulted in major adjustment challenges for students' academic performance at university.

b. Students need to undergo conceptual change in their understanding of learning: Approaches to learning are often dependent on context rather than fixed personal characteristics such as learning styles (Beaty, 1978 and Mathias, 1978 cited in

Gibbs, 1989). Students who have a surface approach to learning (a cause and outcome of alienation) often find it difficult to learn in another way. What is required, is for students to develop new conceptions about learning, since this leads to higher order levels of learning (Perry, 1970; Marton and Saljo, 1976) and an openness to different approaches to learning, since this leads to self awareness through reflection, self-criticism, self-evaluation facilitates independence, creativity and self-reliance (Rogers, 1969).

c. Students need to learn study skills required for academic study: They should develop academic skills in relation to the study of specific disciplines. Skills should not be taught in isolation but in relation the academic, personal and socio-ethical needs of a discipline.

d. Co-operative learning groups enhance the learning of students: Co-operative learning with peers allows for the sharing, negotiation and contesting of ideas and perspectives. This form of interdependence fosters a sense of self-direction and autonomy in learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1987).

e. Students need positive role models: Access to positive role models enhances the learning of skills and competencies. The learning is further reinforced when these role models are their own peers.

f. Students need an environment which provides support and promotes personal well-being: As already stated, the first year experience can be alienating for many students and at many levels. Psyco-social well being impacts on academic performance either directly or indirectly. House (1981) as cited in Jacobi (1991) proposes four broad categories of social support:

- emotional support, which includes esteem, trust, concern and listening;
- appraisal support, which includes affirmation, feedback and social comparison;

- informational support which includes advice, suggestions, directives and information; and
- instrumental support, which includes aid-in-kind, money, labour, time and modifying the environment.

Feedback from students (largely black) at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal indicates that for peer facilitated mentoring to be successful, this form of social support needs to be integrated with and weaved into the substance of academic programmes. For example, the curriculum is largely Euro-centric in content, language of instruction and the form/method of delivery. The impersonal method of delivery of the lecture and the tutorial does not necessarily serve the learning needs of students coming from a communal culture. Their preference is for more interaction and involvement at the level of small groups. For many students, the language of instruction is the second and third. This creates numerous conceptual barriers that hamper effective learning in all disciplines and diminishes confidence in the manner and form of communication. The lack of relevance of the content of disciplines to the everyday reality of students makes it difficult for students to appreciate the value and purpose of higher education. Often, there is a disjuncture or dissonance between the value systems of both the student and the institution. Mahatey et al. (1994:101-123) conclude:

> "...given the space provided for in the mentoring relationship, we saw it as a natural arena in which personal concerns that adversely affect students' functioning are shared. Mentoring also had the benefit of stressing the co-operative over the individual modes of operation."

According to Haensly and Parson (1993:215) all the aspects of mentoring emphasise "the team or co-operative aspect of the real world of work over the individual competitive mode of traditional instruction." These are principles upon which the co-operative model is based.

The literature on mentoring in industry has a different slant or focus. Much of it has to do with induction into a career, career development and upward mobility. The race and class bias is not that visible or significant. However, the literature on peer facilitated

mentoring in higher education has a strong race and class bias – as is evident from the above studies. In addition to addressing issues of race and class, other differences are seen to demand as much attention. These include gender, physical challenge, religion and language. The following discussion on peer facilitated mentoring in higher education serves to provide a framework or guide on implementing the process.

2.4.2 Models of Peer Facilitated Mentoring in Higher Education

The mentoring process functions effectively within a planned, structured and facilitated mentorship programme. Research and experience indicate that with careful design, administration and evaluation, facilitated mentoring programmes can maximise benefits and minimise risks (Murray & Owen, 1991:65). A good mentor programme requires talented leadership, effective co-ordinators, articulate communicators and insightful leaders who are able to inspire both mentors and protégés. Since it is a time-consuming process, a high degree of commitment and dedication is required from the leadership (Ellingson, Haeger & Feldhusen, 1986:5). The management, administration and organisation of this process are essential for the micro-processes of the one-to-one and group counselling.

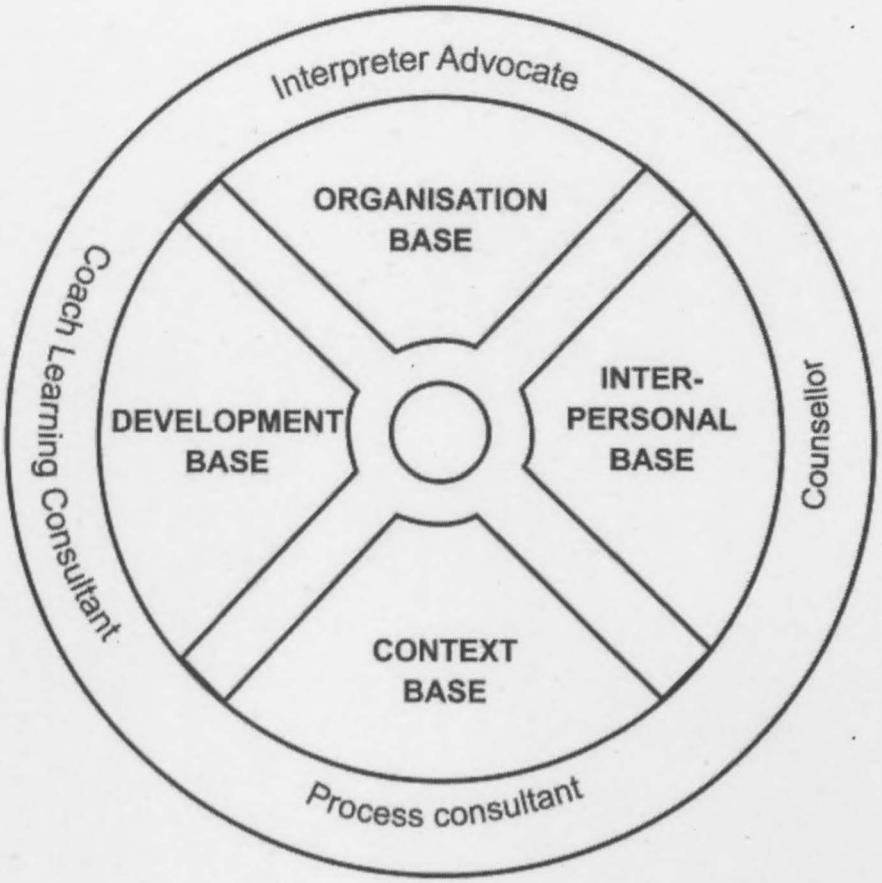
There are those who feel that: "...true mentoring is spontaneous or informal...and cannot be structured or formalised. In their opinion a structured mentoring relationship lacks a critical, magical ingredient. They see it as an arranged marriage – a utilitarian but often lacking passion" (Murray & Owen, 2001:6). Some have painted a dismal picture of the prospects of guiding the process while others (Premac Associates, 1984:55) conclude that: "Mentoring...seems to work best when it is simply 'allowed to happen'".
Clearly, both viewpoints have merit. Mentoring relationships that develop naturally and spontaneously appear to have a far greater propensity for bonding and endurance. The question is, can the university allow high-risk students to bond at will, randomly and without purpose with senior students (mentors)? Is there a guarantee/assurance that spontaneous bonding will occur on a large scale, for all students, and achieve the often difficult and complex outcomes? Can adolescent students (mentors) be left to their own

devices, and are mentees' rights protected in the laissez-faire approach to mentoring? Can any student mentor? Or should there be appropriate selection, recruitment and training for mentors? How well does a spontaneous mentoring programme lend itself to evaluation as opposed to a facilitated mentoring programme? Can we be innovative and creative and create opportunities for spontaneous mentoring within the context of a facilitated mentoring programme?

The following models of mentoring have been selected as providing a basic framework for the conceptualising and implementation of the mentoring process in higher education. Figure 2.4 has been selected for its broad macro perspective on the mentoring process whereas Figure 2.6 has been selected for its micro approach with regard to the implementation of the process of mentoring.

Lewis (2000: 26) provides a model of mentoring called the mentoring wheel that provides a framework for describing the nature of the mentoring relationship and its important component parts. The model provides a reference point that enables an explicit understanding of what the relationship entails, by defining the rationale and framework into which clusters of competencies fit.

FIGURE 2.4: THE MENTORING WHEEL



(Lewis, 2000:1-26)

This model of mentoring has four bases – the organisation basis, the interpersonal basis, the context basis and the development basis. Associated with each base are specific roles or set of roles. It must be noted that these roles do not fully describe each base, since mentoring is a complex and diverse activity. This model encapsulates all of the roles and processes of mentoring and provides a generic description of the process in its many varied forms. Mentoring, in terms of this model, is therefore defined as: "A relationship and a set of processes where one person offers help, guidance, advice and support to facilitate the learning or development of another person" (Lewis, 2000:18). The difference around various terminologies describing mentoring are at times confusing. For

example, counselling and coaching are often defined as mentoring, yet both are but some of the roles of mentoring. Mentoring incorporates coaching and counselling and at the same time focuses on the organisation and the individual, occurs in a context with aims and purpose, is about possibilities and capabilities as well as problems and difficulties, and focuses on learning and development. The four bases and their associated roles are presented in table form in Figure 2.5.

FIGURE 2.5: THE FOUR BASES OF THE MENTORING WHEEL AND THEIR ASSOCIATED ROLES

BASE OF THE MENTORING PROCESS	ROLES ASSOCIATED WITH EACH BASE
The organisation base focuses on the inter-play between the organisation and the expertise, experience and position of the individual mentors within the organisation in relation to how the culture of the organisation impacts directly on the mentor-mentee relationship. In this regard, the success of the mentoring programme depends on the mentor's standing and access within the organisation.	**Advocate or opportunity provider** creates opportunities for people to learn or to develop competence and is associated with the positional strength or credibility within the organisation.
	Interpreter offers managerial or organisational perspectives based on their wider knowledge of the organisation and are transmitters of the culture of the organisation by virtue of knowing the ropes.
The context base refers to a defined set of purposes that bind any particular relationship. The purpose, objectives and the programmes in which they operate provide an important foundation and rationale for the mentoring relationship. The context base requires that mentors know their limits and scope of their role in relation to particular requirements.	**Process consultant** helps the learner to make sense of the broader requirements of the specific relationship by defining objectives, monitoring progress, solving problems, etc.
The development base refers to the need for mentors to know about developmental and learning needs specific to their situation so that they can act in ways that facilitate such learning. For example, the conditions and requirements of adults at work are different from students in higher education. At the least, mentors need a developmental orientation and some personal experience of developmental situations.	**Learning consultant** acts as a consultant adviser or resources on matters associated with learning.
	Coach by intervening directly to pass on knowledge and understanding or to help them develop skills. Mentors are known to have wider experience and expertise.
The interpersonal base "…is underwritten by the skills and attributes that are associated with communication…and points to the nature and quality of the one-to-one relationship between the mentor and the learner…and involves consideration of the values, strengths and motives of each of the individuals involved" (Lewis, 2000: 23).	**Counsellor** acts in the best interests of the individual by having a high degree of empathy and communication skills. A coach can be described as a friend, adviser, guide, guardian and so on.

(Lewis, 2000:1-26)

The organisation base focuses on the inter-play between the organisation and the expertise, experience and position of the individual mentors within the organisation in relation to how the culture of the organisation impacts directly on the mentor-mentee relationship. In this regard, the success of the mentoring programme depends on the mentor's standing and access within the organisation. An advocate or opportunity provider creates opportunities for people to learn or develop competence and is associated with the positional strength or credibility within the organisation. Interpreters offer managerial or organisational perspectives based on their wider knowledge of the organisation and are transmitters of the culture of the organisation by virtue of knowing the ropes.

The context base refers to a defined set of purposes that bind any particular relationship. The purpose, objectives and the programmes in which they operate provide an important foundation and rationale for the mentoring relationship. The context base requires that mentors know the limits and scope of their role in relation to particular requirements. The process consultant helps the learner to make sense of the broader requirements of the specific relationship by defining objectives, monitoring progress, solving problems, etcetera.

The development base refers to the need for mentors to know about developmental and learning needs specific to their situation so that they can act in ways that facilitate such learning. For example, the conditions and requirements of adults at work are different from students in higher education. At the least, mentors need a developmental orientation and some personal experience of developmental situations. The learning consultant acts as a consultant adviser or resources on matters associated with learning. A coach, by intervening directly, knows how to pass on knowledge and understanding or to help students in developing their skills. Mentors are known to have wider experience and expertise.

The interpersonal base:

> "...is underwritten by the skills and attributes that are associated with communication...and points to the nature and quality of the one-to-one relationship between the mentor and the learner...and involves consideration of the values, strengths and motives of each of the individuals involved" (Lewis, 2000: 23).

The counsellor acts in the best interests of the individual by displaying a high degree of empathy and communication skills. A coach can be described as a friend, adviser, guide, guardian and so on (Lewis, 2000:1-26).

Each of the above roles can be described in terms of a set of skills and is related to the personal qualities a mentor must bring to the role. These roles come together in a set of tasks and processes that define the process of the mentor-learner relationship as shown in the mentoring wheel (Lewis, 2000:26). The analogy of the wheel is significant. It is significant since there is a general tendency to attend to the outer wheel by putting air in the tyre, polishing the rim, checking the tread, etc., at the expense of acknowledging the tension, alignment, support of the spokes as equally contingent on the status of the hub (Rupnow & Bowton, 1986:9). The analogy resonates with institutions of higher learning whose professional and polished appearance belies the contradictions and struggles existing within the institution. This model provides a generic description of the process of mentoring in its many and varied forms.

Figure 2.6 is an extraction of the macro model of mentoring and presents an operational plan of the micro aspects of mentoring. The model presented is a synthesis of the Trinity College Mentoring Programme (Murray & Owen, 1991:85) and the Tumor Registrars Association of California Mentoring Program (Murray & Owen, 1991: 89) and the one ultimately adopted at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. In terms of the model, the peer mentor programme is led and managed by a co-ordinator whose function is to plan, organise, manage and implement the programme. The co-ordinator's function is centralised and supported by faculty co-ordinators drawn from each of the faculties. The co-ordinator's functions are devolved to faculty co-ordinators who assist in ensuring that the programme functions effectively in their respective

faculties through a process of monitoring and supervising their mentors. The last block explains how mentors are required to fulfil their duties. The specific activities undertaken by the co-ordinator, faculty co-ordinator, mentors and mentees are detailed in each of the blocks.

FIGURE 2.6: A MODEL OF PEER FACILITATED MENTORING AT THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL

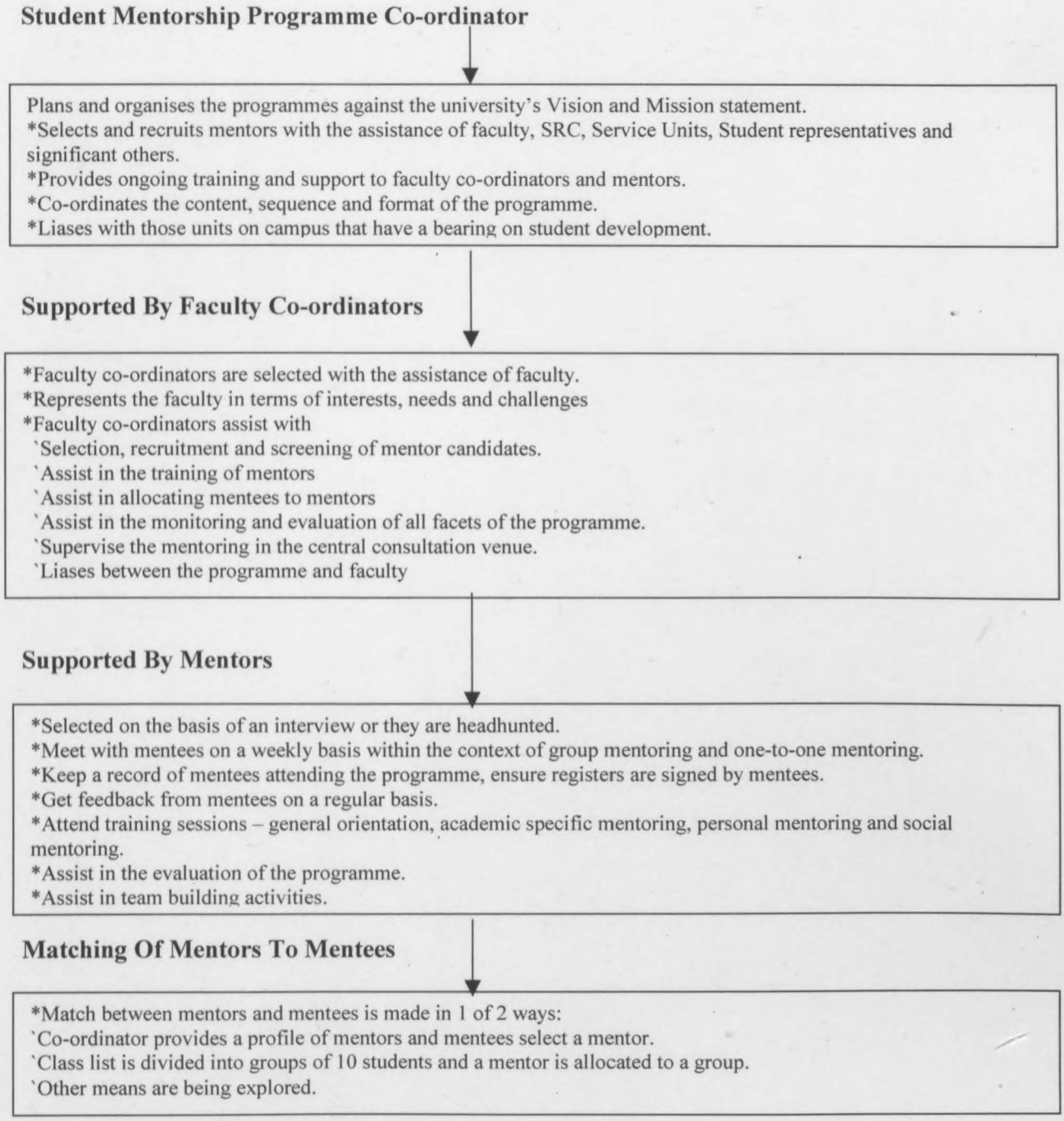


FIGURE 2.6: A MODEL OF PEER FACILITATED MENTORING AT THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL (Continued)

The Mentoring Relationship

*All mentoring occurs in a central consultation venue called J-045
`Mentors negotiate and agree on an informal contract regarding the association (Also explained in the SMP booklet)
`Mentors present their consultation times and paste these on the wall
`Mentees' rights and mentors' obligations towards mentees is explained
`Mentoring occurs in small groups and on a one-to-one level.
`A semi-formal curriculum is designed for the mentoring sessions. This depends on what needs are identified
`All mentoring is supervised

Evaluation of the Programme

*Mentoring is supervised at the following levels:
`Feed back from mentees
`Feedback from mentors
`Feedback from faculty coordinators
`Feedback from other officials
`Feedback takes the following forms; observation, questionnaires, interviews and focused group interviews.

Against the above operational, section 2.4.3 outlines the process and phases of peer facilitated mentoring.

2.4.3 The Process/Phases of Peer Facilitated Mentoring

Defined as "...off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking" (Megginson & Clutterbuck, 1997:3), peer mentors assist new students in coming to terms with a new environment by a process of sharing experience and knowledge. From registration to linking students to valuable resources and units on campus, the mentor plays the role of networker. By introducing mentees to 'significant others' on campus the mentor plays the role of a 'door opener'. Mentor and mentees collaborate with each other on a range of issues and problems, and through a process of engagement and meaningful discussions they are able to arrive at practical and useful solutions. In the context of a developing society the depth of personal engagement between students and mentors/lecturers is indispensable. The mentoring programme at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal is a short-term high impact programme – starting at registration, peaking around April and participation dwindling

from May onwards. Peer mentoring goes through several phases beginning from induction/orientation to the writing of the first examination. All of this happens in the first six months of the academic year. The mentoring relationship that endures beyond this period or time period takes on a different meaning and moves to either a higher level of development or continued and sustained support for very weak students.

2.4.3.a Phases of Peer Facilitated Mentoring

Most successful mentoring relationships go through four phases (Megginson & Clutterbuck, 1995:30-35). These are represented in Figure 2.7. Attached to each phase is an explanation of the associated tasks, dynamics and skill requirements. While these phases are explained sequentially they are not necessarily prescriptive and events may pan out on different trajectories. Nevertheless, it outlines the progress of a typical mentoring relationship. The mentoring relationship itself is a transitional experience (La Rose, 1998:3) where the mentor is a transitional figure whose aim is to empower the learner.

FIGURE 2.7 PHASES OF PEER FACILITATED MENTORING –TASKS, DYNAMICS AND SKILL REQUIREMENTS

PHASE	TASK	DYNAMICS	SKILL REQUIREMENTS
ESTABLISHING RAPPORT/ INITIATION	The mentor and learner will: *work out whether they can get on and respect each other *exchange views on what the relationship is and is not *agree on a formal contract *agree on a way of working together *set up a way of calling meetings, frequency, duration, location *set up other contacts	This phase can be characterised by: *impatience to get going *tentativeness and unwillingness to commit *politeness *testing out and challenging	In this phase the mentor may need to: *suspend judgement *be open to hints and unarticulated wishes or concerns *be clear about what needs establishing and open about what can be left out *establish a formal contract *agree on a way of working together *set up details of future meetings *achieve rapport

Megginson & Clutterbuck (1995:30-35)

FIGURE 2.7 PHASES OF PEER FACILITATED MENTORING –TASKS, DYNAMICS AND SKILL REQUIREMENTS (Continued)

PHASE	TASK	DYNAMICS	SKILL REQUIREMENTS
DIRECTION SETTING/ GETTING ESTABLISHED	The mentor and the learner will: *learn about the learner's style of learning *think through the implications of their style for how they will work together *diagnose needs *determine learner's goals and initial needs *set objective measures *identify priority areas for work *keep an open space *clarify the focus of their work *begin work	Characteristic issues may include: *over-inclination to shut down on possibilities *unwillingness to set goals *reluctance to open up possibilities	In addition to the above: *using and interpreting diagnostic frameworks and tools *encouraging thinking through analysis of implications of diagnoses *adopt developmental approach to goal setting for the learner *help the selection of the initial area for work *give feedback/set objectives/plan *have clarity about the next step
PROGRESS MAKING/ DEVELOPMENT	The mentor and the learner will: *create a forum for progressing the learner's issues *use each other's expertise as agreed *establish a means for reviewing progress and adapting the process in the light of this review *identify new issues and ways of working that are required *be ready for the evolution of the relationship	This phase will typically include: *period of sustained productive activity *dealing with a change in the relationship or the learner's circumstances *reviewing and adapting the relationship *preparing for move on	In addition to the above, this phase also requires: *monitoring progress of the learner *relationship review and renegotiation *recognising achievements/objectives attained *timing and managing the evolution of the relationship
MOVING ON/FINALIZING/ MAINTENANCE	The mentor and the learner will: *allow the relationship to end or evolve *move to maintenance *review what can be taken and used in other contexts	This phase may include: *dealing with rupture or loss *major re-negotiation and continuation *evaluation and generalisation	In this phase there may be a need to: *address own and other's feeling of loss *develop next phase and/or *orchestrate a good ending *think through and generalise learning *establish friendship

Megginson & Clutterbuck (1995:30-35)

The above phases must be considered as providing a broad and general description of the phases of the mentoring process. While the phases to mentoring, as it pertains to

mentoring in the current study, followed the path outlined above, the researcher would like to highlight some of the critical issues as they emerged in each of the phases. At the time of allocating mentors to mentees, both are informed by the co-ordinator/s, of the aims of the programme, the nature of the mentoring relationship and expectations of each. An agreement is made with regard to consultation sessions and times (held in a central venue referred to as J-045) and other specific requirements. Mentees are also provided with an information booklet containing all of the above information. This promotes transparency and democracy and affords protection for both the mentee and mentor. The allocation of mentors to mentees happens January and February during registration.

In the direction setting phase, mentors were not required to provide detailed diagnosis of their mentees' needs. Most mentors are already aware of the issues at hand. Their main goal was to be able to reach out to individual mentees, maintain and sustain their mentees' interests and be able to address the issues as they arise. Through this process mentors were able to get to diagnose and understand their mentees individual needs. From the researcher's perspective, too much keeping of detail and paper work works against the interest of peer mentoring since peer mentoring is informal and non-technical.

In the progress making phase, which peaks around April, the key area of focus is academic mentoring. Much of the discussion, learning and engagement happens around the understanding of concepts, theories, writing skills, building language competency and other academic related issues.

In the final phase of mentoring, one of two things happen – mentees either drop out or request for continued academic assistance. Many mentees drop out of the programme – usually around May. From the researcher's perspective, this is a positive sign since it signals that mentees are empowered and independent to cope on their own. The termination of the mentoring relationship in the current programme is not as formal as those in industry.

The various phases of mentoring are evaluated on a regular basis with a view to ensuring that the mentor-mentee bond is sustained, strengthened and enhanced. The monitoring of the different phases also allows the co-ordinator to evaluate aspects of the programme that are essential, beneficial and in need of change. The most crucial aspect of the monitoring exercise is to ensure that mentors are fulfilling their duties and acting on the mandates entrusted upon them. In relation to this, the needs of mentees are continuously evaluated and most concerns are brought to the awareness of stakeholders when necessary.

2.4.3.b Key Focus Areas of Peer Facilitated Mentoring

Peer facilitated mentoring essentially has three broad areas of focus: social, personal and academic. La Rose (1995:30) identifies social mentoring and academic mentoring as two major themes in the role of the mentor. This conclusion is based on mentors' and mentees' perceptions of each other. A third theme is personal mentoring. The mentor thus plays a triple role working towards combining and synthesising the goals of each. The following discussion points out what the three focus areas of mentoring mean in terms of student challenges and possible needs in the context of higher education.

a. Social mentoring

Social mentoring is generally described as being a friend, acting as a guide, being a role model and being a big brother/sister (La Rose, 1995:30). The key competencies developed are in areas such as social support, networking with significant others on campus, being guided on how to negotiate important symbolic and imaginary (Mann, 2001) issues, accessing the geo-political layout of the institution and providing an example of what is desired behaviour and what is not. One of the goals of equity and access is to improve the participation of women, those that have been marginalised and the physically challenged. Social mentoring also addresses the issues of diversity and leadership development among marginalised youth. Therefore, additional areas of focus

in social mentoring relate to the needs of women, the physically challenged, minority groups, student diversity and a focus on leadership development.

The first aspect of social mentoring relates to social diversity – race, class and ethnicity. Campuses world-wide are becoming more and more diverse (Garland, 1985; Orkin and Pavlich, 1992; Ramsden, 1992). South African campuses are becoming more diverse: racially, nationally, religiously and linguistically. Social diversity has been connected to poor success and poor retention (Chism, 1986:224) on the part of many traditionally under-represented students. On the basis of several studies carried out with students Chism (1986:224) reports that:

> "...students from diverse groups identify the quality of relationships they have with faculty as a critical factor influencing their learning and comfort level with the institution...positive-in-and-out-of-class relationships with their teachers can enable them to overcome constraints and achieve academic success."

Garland (1995:40) supports this point. He claims that greater co-operation between faculty and student affairs in identifying evolving student needs and developing strategies to address them will result in more effective academic and student affairs programmes.

In South Africa, blacks include Africans, Indian and Coloured. In the USA, UK and Europe, people who are not of European origin are sometimes referred to as people of colour or as black. People of colour include African Americans, Hispanics, Latinos, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, people of middle-eastern origin and Asians. Research indicates that people of colour studying at predominantly white universities experience feelings of inferiority and low-self esteem (Davies, M., Dias-Bowie, Y., Greenberg, K., Klukken, G., Pollio, H.R., Thomas, S.P., Thompson, C.L., 2004; La Rose; Lewis, 2000; Scisney-Matlock & Matlock, 2001). Many of the conclusions drawn in the following study have implications for black students studying at South African universities, whether they are HBUs or HWUs. In her study of "The Impact of "Colourblind" Ideologies on Students of Colour: Intergroup Relations at a Predominantly White University", Lewis (2000:74-91) identifies the following as some of the challenges faced by people of colour. Much of it relates to social integration and assimilation within the mainstream

culture of university life – a culture dominated by Anglo-Saxon norms, standards and values.

i. Stereotyping by their white academic staff and peers as being either affirmative action or special candidates heightens their awareness of their marginal status and their feelings of socio-cultural alienation.

ii. White students purported colour-blindness to issues of race and ethnicity – their lack of awareness of their own colour-conscious behaviour and its subsequent stereotyping effects only serves to contribute to a sense of nothingness and inferiority.

iii. Two strains of racial stereotyping were identified. One was academic stereotyping, where black students maintained that white students stereotyped them as less competent on the basis of race. The other was behavioural stereotyping, where white students expected black students to exhibit behaviour typical of blacks. This created distress and led to personal struggles about their identity and competence and forced them to decide whether or not they wanted to conform to notions of stereotypical behaviour.

iv. While students were experiencing pressure from whites to be in conformity with their own racial ethnic group, there was also pressure on them to assimilate into the dominant white mainstream culture leading to personal conflict, confusion, frustration and pain.

v. Black students felt excluded and marginalised from the peer activities outside and inside the class – either deliberately or through the normal course of inter-group relationships. They felt that many of the networks available to white students were closed off to them and difficult to access and even felt that they were not wanted in their academic settings. Black students respond to this by further separating themselves from whites and moving towards each other to form a more positive and affirmative environment – an adaptation strategy.

vi. White students are generally ignorant and reticent to learn the culture and history of minority groups. Often they were uncomfortable in the presence of black students. They were awkward and feared they would not know how to relate to them. This often reinforces racial boundaries by creating a sense of difference and distance. In turn, this leads to unwillingness among black students to engage at all levels of institutional life.

vii. The issue of affirmative action is widely resented by whites and manifests itself in overt resentment and hostilities. This indirectly gives rise to group-level struggles over resources and are played out in interpersonal interactions. The rhetoric on affirmative action and reverse racism leads to vulnerability and protectiveness among Black students, which further reinforces the racial stereotypes.

viii. Faculty members contribute to stereotypical student behaviour by either not addressing racial social relationships and racial stereotypes, or overtly contributing to it. Furthermore, there is no institutional support for challenging traditional patterns of racial ethnic understanding and interaction.

Black students in South Africa are more likely to feel disoriented by the mismatch between their belief system and the Western orientation of the courses offered (Sedumedi, 2002:167). While the dominant student culture is black, the dominant academic culture (in terms of faculty, learning materials, texts, values, ethos, etc.) is Euro-centric/Anglo-Saxon-American. There is also a tendency for academic staff to take the dominant culture for granted, while students who act and behave differently as a result of their different cultural background are inadvertently or deliberately excluded from the dominant academic culture. These differences are accentuated for students who have not had a great deal of experience in the mainstream academic culture and whose native language is not English (Chism, 1986:230).

The second aspect of social mentoring relates to gender. The issues that require attention with regard to gender and mentoring relate largely to women and their development in higher education. The kinds of developmental challenges women face in higher education are:

- women's effort in support of each other;
- women's effort to manage their issues themselves;
- women's effort in servicing women's needs;
- the level of motivation women requires in order to deal with women's issues;
- the types of attitude women have towards women's issues;
- the level of knowledge women have about their issues; and
- the level of skills women have to deal with their own issues. (Regional Gender Policy Implementation Workshop, 2001)

The third aspect of social mentoring relates to the type of physical challenge. Physically challenged students are often overlooked, not only in terms of personal attention but also in terms of physical access to the geographical layout of the institution. This would include access to lecture halls, the cafeteria, cloakroom, transport and the residences. Further challenges include acquiring learning materials adapted to their particular needs (this would include the blind, deaf, physical challenged and other disabilities). Acquiring learning materials for the physically disabled often places a strain on the institution's physical resources. Often universities are not equipped to deal with these challenges.

Tied in with the issue of access and equity is the need to nurture and develop young students into positions of leadership. Higher education invariably attracts the best students. Given the country's political history, the need is greatest among black youths. As Barnett (1992) would say, higher education is about promoting the deepest understanding among students. And it is out of this depth that a society draws its leaders in all spheres of life. Kader Asmal, the previous Minister of Education, summed up the issue of excellence in the South African context as:

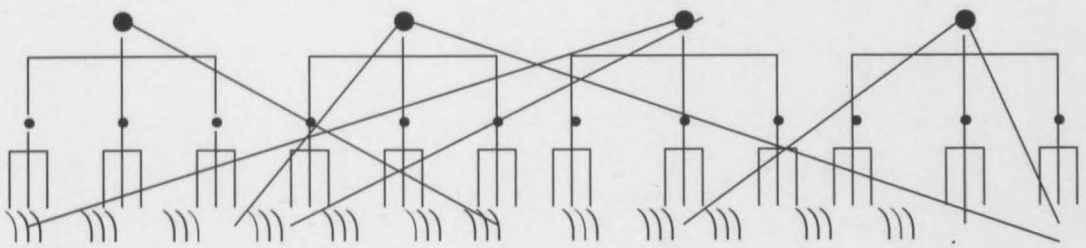
> "...being able to take advantage of the full diversity of talent in our country. Excellence is nothing more than refining and elevating talent to greater heights,

> wherever that talent might happen to be, whether in the heart of urban Gauteng or the remotest village of the Eastern Cape" (Asmal, 2002:17).

Peer facilitated mentoring provides the possibilities and opportunities for students who have leadership potential to develop their abilities. An integral part of mentoring is therefore to develop leadership skills in key areas: personal, social, academic, political, economic and otherwise.

All of this happens in the context of an easy and friendly atmosphere of camaraderie and nation building. In terms of Figure 2.4 academic mentoring would function in the organisational basis, the context basis and the development basis. Given the complex academic, social and personal challenges students have to face, it is highly unlikely that mentors would be able to address all of them – even if a mentee has multiple mentors. Lewis (2000:147) refers to a concept called third party support whereby the co-ordinators and mentors "...supplemented the internal mentoring with external mentoring support for those detailed aspects of the programme that the mentors would find it most difficult to get to grips with." This type of third party support is illustrated in figure 2:8. According to Scisney-Matlock et al (2004:78), there are also times when mentees will need a variety of mentoring relationships with different individuals including academic staff who generally have the most contact with them. A major role of mentors is to guide students in identifying campus and other resources that can help them optimally before problems arise. Accessing the help of several mentors, all of whom provide diverse but specialised help, is described as cross functioning mentoring relationships in Figure 2.8.

FIGURE 2.8: CROSS FUNCTIONING MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS



(Lewis, 2000:147)

The top layer represents a mentor who is associated with a mentee (or several mentees). In terms of Figure 2.8, a mentor is not to mentor those in their direct line of responsibility, but rather mentor cross-functionally so as to widen the perspective of the learners and facilitate cross-functional understanding and communication. In the process, learners and mentors receive some form of third party support. The internal mentors act as facilitators, support the learners, help them to monitor progress and set goals. They contribute their knowledge of the organisation and act as coaches where necessary. The external mentors deal with particular requirements with the detailed aspects of the programme that the mentors would find most difficult to get to grips with (Lewis, 2000:147).

In the context of a university, mentors act as facilitators who support learners, help them set goals and monitor their progress. Mentors also share and contribute their knowledge of the institution and act as coaches where necessary and appropriate. They would act as a bridge between mentees and "other significant others" – the student affairs department, the wellness centre, the residence director, the faculty, the campus doctor, the campus therapist, etcetera, who would deal with the particular requirements of the programme and the specific needs of mentees. The significance of this for marginalised students lie in the possibilities for social networking provided by this model, which invariably influences their academic and personal development.

b. Personal Mentoring

Personal mentoring refers to the kind of emotional and psychological support a mentor provides to the mentee. This falls in the inter-personal base of the mentoring wheel and is purely a supportive function involving the well being of the individual involved. The focus is on psychosocial functions that relate to the individual's values, motives and behaviour rather than to the individual's ability to perform certain tasks. Counselling and friendship are features of psychosocial mentoring (Lewis, 2001:73). Personal mentoring can be viewed as an attempt to reform and transform the university curriculum by introducing a new dimension to student academic development, for example, making the

content of disciplines relevant to the everyday lived experience of the student. Personal mentoring therefore overlaps with social and academic mentoring. For Habermas (1970:10 as cited in Higgs, 2002: 14) university reform should focus on the process of reaching self-understanding. In addition to producing skilled graduates, a university should equip graduates with extra-functional abilities such as attitudes and attributes necessary for success in a profession. The focus on acquiring professional knowledge should be tempered with "...critically transmitting and developing the cultural tradition of a society; and forming the political consciousness of students."

Other areas of development involved in personal mentoring involve time-management, management of studies, goal-setting, building self-confidence, creating a balance between work and play, creating a sense of worth, increasing the ability to communicate and developing other areas of the psychosocial self.

c. Academic mentoring – discipline specific mentoring

Academic mentoring is perceived as helping the students cope with their academic workload, giving tips on how to study better, acting as a liaison between staff and students and helping students prepare for tests and examination (La Rose, 1995:31). In terms of Figure 2.4 academic mentoring would function in the organisational basis, as well as on the context and development basis. It is academic because it has a particular focus on the cognitive needs of a discipline and guided by the norms and values of that specific discipline. Career and professional development is closely tied with academic mentoring.

Academic mentoring cuts at the heart and core of curriculum reform and critical pedagogy. In working closely with students, the mentor will invariably detect weaknesses in the curriculum as it pertains to student academic development and thereby contribute to curriculum reform. Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970/1994) is built around the concern that education needs to be liberatory and transforming. This form of

liberation, of the minds and psyche of students is one of the goals of the post-apartheid educational policy and incorporates strong elements of critical pedagogy.

Gabel (2002) examines the case of a group of marginalised students, namely disabled students and challenges whether 'marginalised' students are represented in the texts of critical pedagogy. Gabel (2002:179) views critical pedagogy as "...socio-cognitive skills, because Freire's approach requires students to be able to "critically consider reality" and to "transform...structures (oppression) so that they can become 'beings for themselves'. Freire argues against an "empty 'mind' passively open to the reception of deposits of reality from the world outside...and assumes that given the proper education people can transform themselves to be active critics who oppose oppression" (Freire, 1994:55-56). Clearly the traditional curriculum (based on a linear approach to learning) does not necessarily address the needs of marginalised students. While critical pedagogy has made some attempts to improve the teaching-learning environment for learners, and its underlying principles remain constant, the practical implications have remained difficult. It is the researcher's view that the academic focus of peer facilitated mentoring provides the space and conditions for addressing the academic and learning needs of marginalized students in several respects.

Students from similar cultural backgrounds are closer in age and are able to reach out to each other in a more constructive way than those from dissimilar backgrounds. Students are more at ease at revealing problems to the comprehending, namely their peers. Mentors may not necessarily be in a position to provide specialised counselling, but act as networkers, thereby ensuring that all support structures on campus are fully utilised as illustrated in Figure 2.8. Successful peers sub-consciously and consciously provide the kind of motivation and encouragement necessary, especially in difficult disciplines like Mathematics, Science and Engineering. Seeing one disadvantaged student rise above barriers and obstacles, propels other students to do the same (Essack, 2002: 15).

The majority of Black students come from a culture with an oral orientation. In this regard the researcher would like to draw on the research of Mazibuko (1999) for the

seriousness and earnestness with which he analyses the learning behaviour patterns of Black and working-class students. Mazibuko (1999) refers to the educational philosopher Rod Clegg who claimed that academic life is a lonely life. Having discussed this in terms of class, Clegg argues that the working class is a gregarious culture. It is also a communal culture, because there is a lack of material possessions and the lack of power to do certain things. As a consequence, academic life, being individualistic in nature, is not for the working class person who seeks comfort in being gregarious and doing things communally. For Mazibuko (1999), most African people live in this gregarious, sociable culture which academic life negates, since academic life demands a very lonely and individualistic lifestyle. As academic life becomes more focused and intense, it becomes more necessary to relinquish the comfort and company of other people. Whether or not there is empirical evidence to support this view, it must be taken seriously for its ability to shed light on the learning styles of working class Black people and the possible learning opportunities that can be explored.

Unlike lectures and tutorials, mentoring is very much about communication and discussion. Bonwell & James (1991:11) concur that discussions are superior to lectures in developing a student's ability to solve problems. Unlike in lectures and tutorials, students in the company of their mentors are able to explore issues in the language they are familiar with and in the company of those who understand their culture. Further, there is a closeness to the life experience – in terms of being marginalised and in terms of time. Mentors deal with specific cultural complexities in ways that are culturally relevant and institutionally appropriate (Essack, 2002:16; Essack, 2002:14). For example, the issue of language is related to the issue of access. Yet, it has not been effectively accommodated for in the mainstream of institutional life. This is in conflict with the country's language policy that recognises all eleven languages as official languages.

Mentors invariably communicate with their mentees in the mother tongue – the language they are comfortable with and understand. This facilitates the process of understanding concepts, theories and principles pertaining to the particular disciplines. At the same time mentees are encouraged to become conversant in the "dominant language" of the

institution in ways that are non-threatening, developmental and incremental. This ties in with the view that in a multilingual society, the knowledge of more than one language is an asset in the economic and social sense, since it opens many doors and cultures (and ways of seeing or perspectives) and contributes to the practice of nation building and pro-democracy. "In the modern world, multilingualism is the norm, not the exception, and South Africa is well endowed in this respect. We work with – not against – the grain of our societal multilingualism" (Overview, Recommendations and Executive Summary, 1996:6). Mentoring allows for the use of the mother tongue as a language of communication, thereby restoring personal identity and respect for oneself as opposed to language as a medium of instruction, disciplinary discourse and a foreign and alien experience.

Unlike lectures and tutorials, mentoring provides background and context to the disciplines in terms of their existence, significance and worth. For example, mentoring elaborates on the history behind mathematics, the philosophy behind engineering, the mathematics of the humanities and so on. It touches on fundamental foundation issues that lectures do not cover and deals with issues that give direction and purpose to their studies. In a developing, largely Third World country like South Africa where the curriculum is largely Euro-centric/Anglo-American, these conceptual gaps render the study of disciplines difficult. Moreso, when students lack the sophistication and know-how on accessing knowledge and information, the content and form of disciplines become remote, foreign and inaccessible.

The discursive nature of mentoring provides for the exchange of ideas that the "stillness" of the curriculum cannot do. It clarifies issues and makes the curriculum relevant to the student's life experience. Mentoring also provides for ongoing and discursive understandings of the content of their disciplines, and it is the only tool that provides ongoing, instant and specific assessment. Mentoring helps the student learn, unlearn and relearn – something the traditional curriculum is unable to effect.

Mentoring breaks down the power relations between the system and the student, the lecturer and the learner, the consumer and the client and the curriculum and the learner. Mentoring has the potential to unveil the mysteries of teaching and learning, and places the student at the centre of the academic process (Bruffee, 1999; Goodsell, 1992; Johnson et al., 1992; O' Loughlin, 1999: 29; Smith & MacGregor, 1992; Shor, 1992).

The engaging and conversational nature of mentoring reaches out to students at levels that the system cannot equal. This is evident from registration through to the orientation process, adjusting to university life, dealing with severe problems at residences and during tests and exams. It has the potential to build on strengths rather than punish weaknesses, thereby fostering confidence and enthusiasm among students. It also has the potential to recognise individual strengths and weaknesses and provide appropriate support. Given the closeness of the interaction, mentors are able to relate teaching and learning strategies to the student's background and style of learning. As a result of the close interaction between them, advisors can detect learning problems at an early stage and provide timeous intervention. This form of close interaction has a direct bearing on performance and retention.

Since mentoring is profound, emotional and deep, it assists in aligning the traditional value system of students with that of the university. The assimilation of values and ethics in higher education are best achieved in the context of peer mentoring, since peers have a profound influence on each other, and they are prone to emulating other successful peers. Conflicting and opposing values are debated and negotiated, allowing young students to arrive at new understandings of the world around them. Henry (1994:108) raises the issue that values and ethics in the higher education curriculum mainly concentrate upon the intellectual or theoretical areas. There is an urgent need to explore how values and ethics can be integrated into the curriculum – an integration that occurs at the personal, social and academic level.

Peer mentoring has an empowering effect on learners and has the potential to free creative energies through peer interaction, peer affirmation and peer reinforcement.

Working with peers on challenging issues creates a sense of nation building and citizenship – elements that are necessary for an emerging democracy.

The almost equal and non-threatening nature of peer facilitated mentoring gives recognition to the student voice and allows for individual student representation. In South Africa, the metaphor of voice is significant in the context of student activism, protest and demonstration for better quality education. Mentoring takes into account the human and individual worth of students as people in their own right. It also gives students a sense of community through which they can engage with pressing social issues affecting their academic performance in a constructive manner.

A serious problem facing first generation students in higher education is their lack of parental guidance with regard to career development. Most parents of first generation university students do not have the kind of educational background or experience to adequately guide their children through the maze of higher education. Difficult issues to grapple with are finance, choice of a university, choice of a career and type of institution are unknown to them. Students are left to themselves and their peers to make important life-choices. The mentor therefore plays an important role in acting as a role model and providing the appropriate kind of guidance that their parents could not.

First generation students require greater clarity on the purpose of higher education. The mentor's expertise in the discipline, his/her maturity, an understanding of the system and the knowledge on how to manipulate the system to one's advantage place him/her in a strong position with regard to empowering the student. However, there must be a willingness and commitment to share and mould the lives of young students. Most black students come from secondary schooling backgrounds that have not prepared them for the academic and other demands of the university. Poor role models in schools, an unclear expectation of the university and insufficient career guidance render the demands of the university difficult.

The mentor is technically the last point of contact after lectures and tutorials. At this point the mentor is able to pick up gaps, weaknesses and specific areas that require development within both the student and the institution. By providing an overall evaluation, he/she is able to consolidate much of the student's experiences and to redirect the student's academic development. This process of consolidation is explained in more detail in Figure 2.8.

The mentor invariably assists in building a sense of community for students within a diverse society, without necessarily compromising individual identity. Student feedback often describes peer mentoring in vernacular terms such as "ubuntu" and "batho pele". Peer mentoring gravitates towards the principles and values of democracy, all of which are invaluable for the nurturing of mutual respect, tolerance and acceptance in a multi-cultural, diverse and plural society.

Despite the above benefits of mentoring for non-traditional students, Garland (1985:33) cautions that: "... it is not solely non-traditional students who are deficient in basic skills; increasing numbers of traditional students have also been found to need remedial programs." Therefore, the above benefits of peer facilitated mentoring, as it pertains to marginalised students, have relevance to students who come from both traditional and non-traditional backgrounds.

2.4.4 Selection and Recruitment of Mentors

Notwithstanding the organisation, planning and the infrastructure of the mentoring programme, the single most important factor that determines the success of mentoring is the mentor. Lewis (2000:31) claims that there are practical implications for the selection of mentors. Therefore, careful and planned attention needs to be paid to the selection, recruitment and training of mentors. The selection process is complex, but in a large organisation such as a university where several interests are represented in the peer mentor programme, the participation of all stakeholders is essential in the selection of mentors. The following factors were taken into account in the selection of mentors at the

Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. The process of how and who gets to select mentors was broadly representative of academic staff, students, student affairs personnel, health services personnel and others who interface with students (such as library staff, residence personnel, campus security, etcetera). In fact, the democratic principles of participation and development in the entire mentoring programme influenced the degree to which the goals of mentoring were achieved.

Mentors could participate in the mentoring programme in one of two ways, either as volunteers or being selected through a rigorous selection and recruitment process. In the context of a university even volunteers need to be screened, since the potential for abuse is rife in peer relationships. This screening could be based on interviews, role-play and group discussions. Mentors were also be head hunted or accepted as referrals from academic staff, the student service centre, residence and other relevant people on campus. Criteria for the selection of mentors included taking into account the four contexts in the mentoring wheel and the roles and tasks of a mentor. These criteria should be arrived at democratically, and they generally include skills, attributes and personal experience. The criteria for the selection coincide closely with the qualities of a good mentor.

2.4.4.a Qualities of a 'Good' Mentor [in inverted commas because it is a value-judgement]

Almost every positive adjective describing human behaviour can be attributed to a "good" mentor. The following categories are some of the more salient attributes or qualities of a good mentor based on feedback from learners and mentors (Lewis, 2000:32).

a. **Management perspective:** The management perspective refers to experience and competence in management or in working with managers in organisations, and widespread exposure to and understanding of management practice and pressures. A knowledge of the mission of the university, its culture, access to people in management, an understanding of the geo-political set-up and issues (problematic

and otherwise) specific to the organisation is essential. Parsloe (1992:72) defines a good mentor as "...sufficiently senior to be in touch with the corporate structure, sharing the company's values and able to give the candidate access to resources and information."

b. **Organisational know-how:** Organisational know-how refers to knowing how to get things done within the organisational system in which the learner works. This would mean knowing the various avenues available for the achievement of goals – access to which could simplify the life of a student. In essence, a mentor must be institutionally street-wise. It is also useful for the mentor and the mentoring programme to have a high degree of status and credibility within and among the numerous pockets of activities in the institution.

c. **Credibility:** Credibility refers to the enjoyment of personal and professional credibility by a mentor, either in his/her own right or with members of the organisation in which the learner works.

d. **Accessibility:** Accessibility refers to making oneself available to others when required. Accessibility takes on many forms, such as emotional, physical, psychological and other levels and forms of accessibility – the absence of which may hinder effective mentoring.

e. **Communication:** Communication refers to having a strong range of interpersonal skills and the ability to understand other's ideas, views and feelings.

f. **Empowering orientation:** Empowering orientation refers to the ability to create a climate and conditions in which individuals feel safe to try out different ways of doing things; to contribute more fully and have a bigger share in what is going on in their organisation.

g. **Developmental orientation:** Developmental orientation refers to having experience of and taking a keen and active interest in others' development.

h. **Inventiveness:** Inventiveness refers to being open to new ideas and different ways of doing things; being able to perceive different and useful connections and patterns; and being a good and creative problem-solver in his or her own right. (This list was developed by Brian O'Neill) and cited in Lewis (2000:32).

The first three items relate to the organisational base of the mentoring wheel and "…taken together, suggest a powerful package that mentors can bring to bear in support of, and on behalf of, their learners." These features are also highly valued by learners.

Parsloe (1992:71-72) identifies the following features of a good mentor:

i. "Mentors are good motivators, perceptive, able to support the objectives of the programme and fulfil their responsibilities to the candidate.

ii. Mentors are high performers, secure in their own position within the organisation and unlikely to feel threatened by, or resentful of, the candidate's opportunities.

iii. Mentors are able to show that a responsibility for mentoring is part of their own job description.

iv. Mentors are able to establish a good and professional relationship, be sympathetic, accessible and knowledgeable about the candidate's area of interest.

v. Mentors are good teachers, able to advise and instruct without interfering, allowing candidates to explore and pursue ideas, even though there may be no optimum pathways.

vi. Mentors are good negotiators, willing and able to plan alongside their own management teams and academics".

It is also the case that these qualities do not need to be "trained into" mentors because they arrive with them ready-made (Lewis, 2000:33). However, the other areas of mentoring need to be developed to the extent that mentors either do not possess the skill, or that it is latent. The training of mentors is integral to the mentoring process and thus occupies an important place in the mentoring programme.

2.4.4.b Training of Mentors

The training needs of mentors depend on the context and the purpose of mentoring. In the current context of peer facilitated mentoring, the training needs of mentors can be analysed by using the four bases of the mentoring wheel. Lewis (2000:44) states that while training needs usually fall into the following three categories, a fourth category is added by the researcher, discipline specific understanding, providing a diagnosis and agenda for any training that is necessary:

a. **Mentoring skills and processes:** The questions to ask are whether mentors:

- Understand what mentoring is about?
- Know about the separate roles involved?
- Know about the process of facilitation?

b. **Interpersonal and communication skills:** The questions to ask are whether mentors:

- Understand and use counselling skills?
- Listen as well as tell?
- Use appropriate questioning skills?
- Have empathy?
- Establish good and effective working relationships?

c. **Learning and development:** The questions to ask are whether mentors:

- Have a developmental orientation?

- Understand the learning cycle?
- Have coaching skills?
- Respect other learning styles?

d. **Discipline specific understanding:** The questions to ask are whether mentors:
   - Are fully conversant with the academic needs of their discipline?
   - Understand and implement some form/s of innovative teaching method?
   - Have a broad understanding of various styles of learning as it pertains to andragogy – learning among adults?
   - Understand and communicate the language of the discipline/instruction that would be most accessible to the learner?
   - Have knowledge of curriculum development and curriculum reform, including content development, assessment practices and learning styles?

2.4.5 Selection and Recruitment of Mentees

The criteria for the selection of mentees must be determined by the interplay of forces between the organisational, developmental, interpersonal and context of mentoring. In the current study, the needs of students together with the goals of the organisation, in this case the university will determine who requires mentoring. While the peer facilitated mentoring programme is located largely around the first year student, it is the weaker among the first year cohort of students that are targeted for this form of additional support and development. Mentees could volunteer to work on the programme, be referred by faculty/student affairs department or be encouraged to participate in the programme for its many benefits. Some campuses require that the stand-alone mentoring is either compulsory and serve as a module that contributes towards a degree programme, or that the programme ties in with some form of first year seminar that is also compulsory.

Once mentees are admitted to the programme, there needs to be a commitment from both mentors and mentees to mutually achieve and work towards realising the goals agreed

upon. In many respects, the initial success of establishing this partnership depends on the skills and expertise of the mentor. While some mentors are naturally talented, others require training and development. The training and development of mentors are crucial to the success of the relationship.

2.4.5.a Profile of the Mentee

Given the history of higher education in South Africa, especially over the last 20 years, there is a general perception that mentees are academically under-performing students coming from impoverished backgrounds. While this might be the case, there are also better performing students who benefit from the peer facilitated mentoring programme. However, these students will most likely exit the programme much earlier than their counterparts. The mentee is generally a black student (or a minority student), coming from an under-prepared socio-economic background, with little life experience in terms of the demands of the university and a poor understanding of career development. Older students, part-time students, female students and physically challenged students constitute some of the diversity found in the student population the world over.

While the literature on peer mentoring may provide some understanding on the profile of mentees, it is essential to conduct a needs assessment for every intake of students, as backgrounds vary and changes in the student population are inevitable. Needs assessments carried out previously can serve to guide current assessment. This assessment should be ongoing and serve to influence not only the content of the mentoring process, but also aspects of institutional life. In other words, the mentoring programme should serve to inform inputs on various forms of institutional development and thereby contribute to the overall quality of the institution.

2.4.5.b Needs of Mentees

A needs assessment has to be implemented at three levels: assessing the needs of mentees from the perspective of mentees, assessing the needs of mentees from the perspective of

mentors and assessing the needs of both as identified by academic staff/student affairs and others. While it may be difficult to conduct a needs assessment at the outset, such a practice is preferable. However, student problems emerge and manifest themselves only once the academic programme has started. It is thus preferable to begin the needs assessment after the first two weeks of lectures. It is also during the first two weeks that students begin to settle in and make their psychological, social and geographical adjustments. The needs assessment should be an ongoing process that builds into and feeds all aspects of the programme. The assessment can be conducted through general conversations with mentors and mentees, questionnaires, picking up advice from academic staff/student affairs and by observing areas of difficulty in student behaviour.

2.4.6 Matching Mentors to Mentees

By far the most difficult aspect of mentoring, and especially peer facilitated mentoring, is creating a match that is mutually beneficial to both parties. The matching of mentees to mentors influences the success of mentoring and needs to be treated with great care. In matching mentors with mentees the natural process of bonding should be adhered to as closely as possible. In order to achieve this, events such as, rituals, ceremonies and any other form of symbolic activity that foster mentor-mentee contact should be held. The following characteristics need to be taken into account when matching mentors to mentees: professional/academic discipline, age, gender, race, religious background, linguistic background, ethnic background, geographical accessibility, the personal preferences of mentees and mentors, and other variables that may influence mentee participation in the programme.

Mentees should preferably be matched at an event that symbolises the beginning of a productive partnership. This event could take the form of a semi-formal function, workshop, tutorial, orientation session or some symbolic ritual that marks the beginning not only of the mentor-mentee partnership, but also the beginning of an exciting academic career. The introduction of mentors to mentees usually happens during the orientation phase – orientation that provides a symbolic rite of passage from school to

university. The aims of the programme should be explained in detail at the outset. This explanation should be rooted in a code of conduct that all participants would adhere to. All stakeholders – adhering once again to the democratic principles of the programme – should draw up this code of conduct. All mentors and mentees should be aware of their rights and responsibilities, and a Charter or an enforceable Code of Conduct should preferably guide their behaviour. Mentors should be given an opportunity to introduce themselves to mentees so that mentees can select whom they would like to work with. The co-ordinator of the programme should oversee and supervise this process so as to ensure that the most appropriate selection is made, mentees are not left out of the matching process and all opportunities for abuse are eliminated. A register and some record of the mentees' personal preferences, social disposition and academic ability would be useful. In instances where the mentors/mentees are struggling to find suitable mentors/mentees, the co-ordinator may intervene. The average ratio of mentor to mentee should be 1:10 – but this would vary, depending on the context.

Given the diversity of student needs, it may be that mentees request multiple mentors, since different people fulfil different needs. This should be encouraged and a cross fertilisation of ideas and energies should further serve the interests of mentees as illustrated in Figure 2.8.

Gardiner (1997:55) identifies the following lessons regarding the mentoring process learnt from her experience of working on a mentoring project.

a. While mentors need to be enthusiastic about the expectations of the mentees, a balanced outlook of what is realistically achievable is required, as this is "…critical to the success of all parties."

b. The mentor co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring the best match between mentor and mentee by drawing on professional expertise and experience.

c. Mentoring requires the following skills: active listening, empathy, counselling, negotiation, coaching, advocacy, decision making, reflection and review, constructive feedback, interpersonal skills and verbal and non-verbal communication.

In supervising the mentor-mentee participation in the programme, the co-ordinator is able to detect any mismatch and act accordingly. Further points to acknowledge are that a mentor may be erroneously selected, not all mentors may be good at the job, mentors may be in the programme for the wrong reason, the mentor training programme may need to be more responsive to the training needs of mentors and mentees may not want to participate in the programme for various reasons. The programme co-ordinator (together with the faculty co-ordinators) is obliged to investigate why mentees are unwilling to participate in the programme. All efforts to engage such mentees should be made, especially for the under-performing students. These efforts to engage unwilling weaker students might include soliciting the assistance of significant others: parents, friends, residence directors, student representatives and others.

The significance of ensuring a proper match between mentors and mentees is to ensure that the working relationship will maximise the greatest potential among students. Parkey et al. as cited in Olsen (1989:27), claims that working relationships are powerful since they are complex, two-way, unfolding and changing over time. They are intense, one-to-one forms of teaching. The degree and quality of caring is similar to the intimacy found among family members. The teaching goes beyond knowledge and skills to include a context of teaching and learning the ropes and an induction into the professional way of life.

2.4.7 Benefits of Peer Facilitated Mentoring

The benefits of peer facilitated mentoring apply to the mentee, mentor and the organisation. The benefits are numerous. However, it must be noted that peer mentoring relationships may go wrong, and very badly too. The benefits are discussed in 2.4.8.

2.4.7.a Benefits to the Mentee

Gardiner (1997:52-53) identifies the following benefits and opportunities to mentees:

a. raise self-esteem, self-respect and thus self-confidence;
b. gain confidence in their own ability, enabling them to shape their own life chances;
c. increase communication skills – that is more confidence in the use of non-verbal, written and verbal communication;
d. develop core skills enabling a greater understanding of 'self' in the context of the wider society;
e. develop greater motivation and determination to succeed;
f. demonstrate what can be achieved;
g. achieve greater independence – increased decision making, organisation, planning and problem solving skills. This is in keeping with the outcome of co-operative learning;
h. set own goals and gain a sense of achievement through moving on;
i. become a positive role-model;
j. develop self-pride and sense of worth; and
k. enhance understanding of the discipline.

2.4.7.b Benefits to the Mentor

Gardiner (1997:52-53) and Lewis (2000) identify the following benefits to mentors.

a. able to transfer work and knowledge to work and personal situations;
b. more able to analyse problems;
c. development of listening skills;
d. raised expectations of self and young person being mentored;
e. a sense of achievement;

f. greater communication skills;
g. greater sense of self-analysis;
h. more aware of the perceptions of others;
i. develops intuition;
j. more able to assist in the decision making processes for self and in the use of guidance to the young person;
k. raised self-esteem;
l. more self-empowerment gained through the processes (mentoring and development sessions);
m. development of patience and tolerance;
n. more motivated and greater confidence;
o. more influential to the benefit of others;
p. increased personal effectiveness;
q. increased interpersonal skills;
r. more focused; and
s. more highly developed, mentor-specific skills.

2.4.7.c Benefits to the Organisation

Peer facilitated mentoring contributes to the overall quality of the institution by ensuring that students successfully negotiate and mediate difficult aspects of institutional life. This results in increased student success and retention, a better quality of life for all, increased chances of employment and increased subsidies for the university. Holbeche (1995:96) claims that mentoring allows for the establishment of communication channels "...across line or matrix which reinforces the development of a team culture, a vital ingredient in an organisation aspiring to total quality." She further states that the visibility of individuals is raised, which in turn influences success and retention.

The organisation of the university, as it pertains to student needs and student performance, is generally fragmented. This is because of the separate and isolated functioning between student affairs personnel and faculty, and between the various units

as such. "Least noticed in the subcultures of academic enterprises and systems, but of growing importance, is the separation of administrative cultures from those of faculty and students" (Clark, 1982:89 as cited in Kuh & Whitt, 1988:93). Administrative staff administer the whole gamut of management activities. As students begin to perceive the administrative culture as "separate and alien" in its commitment, priorities, values and assumptions (Kuh & Whitt, 1988:93), an understanding of the higher education system as incomprehensible, complex and inaccessible begins to emerge.

Instead of responding to efficiency and relevance, the institution struggles to deliver on basic priorities. For example, the academic staff's unawareness of scholarships, funding, accommodation and transport further hampers the student's ability to access vital resources. The opposite is also true for administrative staff. Peer mentors act as a bridge between these two worlds by linking administrative concerns to academic imperatives, thereby strengthening organisational and institutional effectiveness.

Peer facilitated mentoring has the potential to contribute towards the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that all aspects of the academic and social programme are adequately dealt with. Figure 2.9. provides a description on how peer facilitated mentoring serves to consolidate the learning process within the broader academic programme. This essential consolidation of the learning process serves to achieve the national goals of equity and social redress that the traditional academic programme at a contact university finds difficult to achieve and the virtual university unable to achieve. A mentor aims to complete and consolidate the learning process by attempting to tie up the loose ends – in a non-threatening and trusted way. Left to their own devices, students are bound to waste it on unproductive activities. Further, contact time with the formal academic programme is minimal. The institution's ability/capacity to influence and control student behaviour positively is thus severely challenged.

Given that the greater part of student learning occurs outside the lecture room, peer facilitated mentoring serves to influence student behaviour at crucial points in the academic lives of students. A key challenge facing the institution is the lack of a culture

of learning among students. For the most part, students work independently. At best, we are only able to influence student behaviour through the formal mechanisms of lectures, tests and exams. Yet, it is estimated that while the lecture room is the most important place for the student, listeners can recall little of a lecture, except those with above-average intelligence and education (Verner & Dickinson, 1967 as cited in Johnson et al, 1991).

In a very incisive presentation on the nature of lecturing at South African universities, (Wolff, 2003:10) states quite openly that:

> "But the most cursory glance at the pass rates shows that the old ways are not working. They may have been good ways, I shan't dispute that, though I have my doubts. But they are failing miserably to educate the young Black men and women who are coming to universities and technikons today. I believe that the progressive ideals that inspired and guided the struggle against apartheid demand that academics today make the transformation of the classroom experience their highest priority. If I were forced to make a choice, I would rather see an all-White teaching staff creatively, imaginatively, and successfully educating generations of Black students than a Black teaching staff reproducing the old punitive system of high failure rates and the mindless, destructive maintenance of standards. But of course no such choice need be made. With generosity of spirit and a willingness to experiment, South African academics can find many ways to reach and truly educate their students. Like doctors, who treat every lost patient as a medical failure, university lecturers should treat low pass rates as marks of their own inadequate teaching methodology."

The issues raised in this statement are profound. While it may be useful to continue to adopt the normal methods of teaching, as we are so accustomed to, the current context makes it essential to re-examine the impact of current methods of teaching and learning, with its associated strengths and weaknesses. The closest we come to having a deep and profound influence on student behaviour/learning is through the process of peer facilitated mentoring (provided it is compulsory). But for learning to be effective, there should ideally be a compatibility or alignment between lectures, tutorials and peer mentoring. That this is not necessarily the case is a reflection of a lack of systematic planning and organisation of the learning process. In keeping with the need for a sequential, systematic and planned learning process the following is essential:

a. an alignment of the goals of lecturing, tutoring and peer mentoring;

b. an integration between the content of lecturing, tutoring and peer mentoring;
c. a common and singular purpose that defines the first year programme; and
d. a resonance of the mission of the university in the goals of the academic and mentoring programme.

The above means that what happens at lectures and the institution must filter down to tutorials and to the mentoring sessions. A point to note is that there is an assumption that lectures and tutorials are presented in an adequate way. This may not necessarily be the case. In any event, it would appear that the deepest learning is able to happen at tutorials and during the mentoring sessions. Tutorials in themselves are not sufficient to consolidate learning. Hence, the need for a more integrated approach to learning is required.

Figure 2.9 indicates the differences between lecturing, tutoring and peer facilitated mentoring which are the dominant forms of delivery at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. The figure highlights the developmental and consolidating role of peer facilitated mentoring as opposed to tutorials and lectures. Other forms of delivery as in distance education are not discussed since the virtual university and the associated technology do not necessarily feature in the human activity of peer facilitated mentoring. As already mentioned, the greater part of the academic development of first generation students is dependent on close and collaborative interaction. Figure 2.9 presents a summary of the analysis of the similarities and differences between the three modes of delivery and is a synthesis, based on the researcher's insights and critique. As such, a reference source cannot be attached to Figure 2.9. The specific descriptions on lectures and tutorials are drawn from (Bligh, 1998; Pastoll, 1992). The relevance of this comparative analysis is that it highlights the manner in which peer facilitated mentoring contributes to the quality of institutional life and thereby benefits the organisation.

FIGURE 2.9

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LECTURES, TUTORIALS AND PEER FACILITATED MENTORING – CONTRIBUTING TO TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT THROUGH A PROCESS OF CONSOLIDATION

LECTURES	TUTORIALS	MENTORING
One to many interaction	One to many interaction	One to one or one to three interaction
Lecturer and subject centred	Largely tutor and subject centred	Largely learner centred and linked to resources on campus
Lecture and classroom paced learning	Tutor paced learning	Self-paced or learner paced learning Not confined to a particular subject
The first point of contact with the academic programme. Introduction to goals, objectives and concepts specific to the discipline	An extension of lectures, where issues are discussed and debated in small groups. Concepts are clarified, applied and synthesised.	An extension of tutorials and lectures where issues are clarified and understood on student terms that takes into account personal and social issues
Academic in nature Does not focus on attitudes, values, personal and social adjustment	Mainly academic in nature	Academic in nature and integrated with personal and social issues relating to and that impact on academic development
Pure transmission of information – Passive	Clarifies issues and thereby facilitates the learning process - Active and passive	Critically explores issues and thereby consolidates the learning process. Active, conversational & inspirational
Makes assumptions about the teaching process in terms of the jug and mug concept Refer to 2.4.3.2.iii.	Makes different assumptions about **training needs of tutors**	Makes different assumptions about **training needs of mentors**
Makes different assumptions about the way students learn	Makes different assumptions about **learning needs of tutees**	Makes different assumptions about **learning needs of mentees. Allows for the diversity of thought**
Lecturer led	Tutor led	Mentee led and reciprocal
Is confined to a 45 minute lecture	Is confined to a 45 minute tutorial, in a venue and time-bound	Can happen anywhere and at anytime for any length of time-exemplifies the democratic process
Effects are of an academic nature – short term	Effects are of an academic nature – generally short term	Effects are academic, personal and social. Effects are enduring and all-inclusive

This scenario indicates that peer facilitated mentoring, located at the end of (and within) the sequential structuring of the teaching and learning process, achieves integration and inclusiveness. Bligh (1998:10) makes the following claims about the lecture:

a. The lecture is as effective as other methods to transmit information.
b. Most lectures are not as effective as discussions to promote thought.
c. Changing students' attitudes should not normally be the major objective of a lecture.
d. Lectures are relatively ineffective to teach values associated with subject matter.
e. Lectures are relatively ineffective to inspire interest in a subject.
f. Lectures are relatively ineffective for personal and social adjustment.
g. Lectures are relatively ineffective to teach behavioural skills.

While the lecture as a mode of delivery has a pedagogic role to play in the academic development of the student, the lecturer is limited since he/she does not have the potential to engage learners in a such manner that meaningful learning has necessarily taken place. The lecture overlooks the psychosocial development of the student and largely excludes other forms of delivery such as discussion, problem-solving approaches, case studies, role-play, modelling and simulations.

On the other hand, the tutorial incorporates large elements of discussion, but is still largely subject and teacher centred. According to Pastoll (1992:1) "A tutorial is an occasion for students to receive feedback about their own constructions of meaning." A tutorial has a smaller number of students. It has four main features: stimulus material, an interpretation task, airing and sharing, and feedback" (Pastoll, 1992:1). While the tutorial has definite advantages over the lecture, the following are some of the limitations:

a. As an extension of the formal lecture, the tutorial is largely academic in nature and subject centred.
b. Teaching and learning follows the pace of the tutor rather than the learner.
c. The tutorial is confined to a particular physical space and time.

d. The effects of a tutorial may be short-term.

Unlike lecturing and tutoring, peer facilitated mentoring is learner centred, with great potential for initiating the process of self-reflective and life-long learning necessary for success in a highly competitive economy. The learner sets the pace for learning, with the mentor guiding and leading the process according to individual needs. While lectures and tutorials are academic in character, mentoring is of a personal and social nature where individual problems are counselled in relation to academic performance. Mentoring serves to complete the learning process through a process of review, analysis and assessment based on individual needs. Mentoring can occur anywhere and informally. Given the personal nature of peer mentoring, the effects are deep, profound and enduring. Unlike the formal academic programme, peer facilitated mentoring has great potential to meet the equity and transformatory goals set out in the National Plan for Higher Education in South Africa – a plan that places emphasis on close personal interaction. Since peer facilitated mentoring reconciles all aspects of institutional life in relation to resources available within the institution and as their combined impact promote academic performance, the chances of student success and retention are increased.

The strategy of peer facilitated mentoring can be seen as an appropriate learning tool for problems in higher education, serving to fulfil goals of the Human Resource Development strategy and the transformatory challenges facing higher education in South Africa. Moreover, it is seen to have particular relevance for the needs of students in a developing society.

2.4.8 Some Weaknesses or Drawbacks of Peer Facilitated Mentoring

Like any form of intervention programme, peer facilitated mentoring clearly has its limitations or problem areas. Bad mentors are to be found in any mentoring programme. Darling (1984) refers to the negative mentoring relationships as toxic, and portrays four main types of mentors in her "Gallery of Toxic Mentors":

a. 'Avoiders' are mentors who are neither available nor accessible. They either ignore issues raised or do not respond; they excuse this kind of behaviour by claiming that they are teaching their mentees to be independent.

b. 'Dumpers' throw people into a new role or situation and leave them to sink or swim. In most instances this is deliberate, otherwise they are caught off guard in an unexpected dilemma not of their choosing. Darling identifies a sub-group of dumpers who completely abdicate their responsibilities (butt-sitters).

c. 'Blockers' actively avoid meeting their mentees' needs, either by outright refusal or by control through withholding information.

d. 'Destroyers' are even more toxic and tear down their mentees in some way. Often they do not realise what they are doing; they are under the misguided conception that mistakes must be pointed out before they are improved, and in the process they tear down a person's self-esteem.

Clearly, a stringent selection and recruitment process, intense mentor training, mentee re-education with regard to their rights and responsibilities as mentees (the responsibility of the co-ordinator), close and tight supervision over the process and vigilance by all concerned could address the problem of bad mentors and poor mentoring. Disciplinary measures against erring mentors may also be useful and should be brought to the attention of all stakeholders involved.

2.4.9 The Conditions of Good Mentoring

In the light of the need to be cognisant of the possibilities of poor and good mentoring, the conditions that determine good mentoring are seen on two levels. The first is that the mentor participates fully in the training of the mentee's development, have credibility and are well-informed, and perceived by the mentee to be so (Wilkin, 1992: 70). The second

is for the institution, the mentors and the mentee to plan the mentoring curriculum together so that mentees are empowered to put their ideas into practice in a planned, systematic and institutionally relevant manner.

2.4.10 Overall Evaluation of the Process of Peer Facilitated Mentoring in Higher Education

The mentoring programme is an intervening variable from school to university. The programme is designed to elicit particular, positive and targeted changes among its recipients. In order to ascertain whether the programme achieved its stated objectives and/or goals, it must be evaluated. The process of evaluating a programme is a complex one. Galuzzo & Craig (1990) as cited in Odell (1992:99) argue that: "It is appropriate, however, to acknowledge that the specification of how an evaluation should be carried out is relatively more difficult to answer, primarily because the concepts being assessed are so complex."

Certainly, no one-shot, brief enquiry made by means of a questionnaire or interview during the first year of teaching will be sufficient to provide a complete evaluation of a mentoring program. At least, the evaluative process needs to include an ongoing formative component. Programme evaluation can be defined as:

> "...a collection of methods, skills and sensitivities necessary to determine whether a human service is needed and likely to be used, whether it is sufficiently intense to meet the unmet need identified, whether the service is offered as planned, and whether the human service actually does help people in need at a reasonable cost without undesirable side effects" (Posavac & Carey, 1992:1).

The process of evaluation must display some form of uniformity and accountability, since uniformity renders the results valid and reliable. In this regard, Cronbach, et al. (1980) define evaluation as: "A systematic evaluation of events occurring in and consequent of a contemporary program – an examination conducted to assist in improving this program and other programs having the same general purpose". In addition, Nevo (1995:12) defines evaluation as: "An act of collecting systematic information regarding the nature and quality of educational objects". The critical factor in evaluation is one of

effectiveness, which, according to Murray & Owen (191:162) is "...measured by the amount of improvement in performance produced by a new, compared with a previous, method of training." These authors also maintain that problems with collecting effectiveness data involve the identification of relevant measures, since several measures can be identified (as in the current study). It also involves demonstrating that student performance measured in the test environment will also occur in the workplace and other settings at a later stage.

Peer facilitated mentoring contributes to the total quality improvement of the institution by ensuring that students make the fullest possible use of 'all' resources on campus in order to maximise their potential. Evaluation of the peer facilitated mentoring programme is integral to its sustained and improved development. Evaluation allows for the constructive development of the programme in relation to its stated objectives, goals, content and process of achieving the goals.

According to (Wickham, 2000:1), critical questions for guiding the evaluation of the programme include the following:

a. Have the anticipated outcomes been reached without unreasonable costs or undesirable side effects?
b. What difficulties are being/were encountered and how are/were these dealt with?
c. What are/were the strengths of the programme?
d. What are/were its weaknesses or absences?
e. What could have been done better or differently?

The evaluation of the programme can either be summative (at the end) or formative (continuous). Scriven (1967) as cited in Tyler (1967) was the first to identify the difference between formative and summative evaluation, referring to them as two major roles or functions of evaluation. Formative evaluation is used for the improvement and the development of an ongoing activity (programme, person, product, etcetera) and summative evaluation is used for accountability, certification or selection. Given the

complex and fluid nature of peer facilitated mentoring, both forms of evaluation are beneficial. For the peer facilitated mentoring at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, both forms of evaluation were utilised. The views of several participants are important in the evaluation of the programme. These include those of the mentees, the mentors, others involved in the programme at faculty level and management level (in the current study), faculty co-ordinators, programme co-ordinators and other personnel linked either directly or indirectly to the programme.

2.4.10.a Feedback from Mentees

Feedback from mentees, the principal recipients of the programme gives an indication on the impact of the pgramme on student development. Feedback serves to guide and direct the content of the programme. Feedback can take the form of interviews, questionnaires, content analysis and observation. Mentees are in a position to identify the following:

a. their specific academic, personal and social needs;
b. weaknesses and strengths in the delivery of the programme;
c. mentor strengths and weaknesses;
d. organisational strengths and weaknesses; and
e. training needs of mentors.

2.4.10.b Feedback from Mentors

Feedback from mentors is essential, as they find themselves at the interface of the mentoring programme. They do not only represent the essence of the programme, but also the mission and vision of the institution. In many respects they serve as ambassadors for the institution. Feedback from mentors can take the form of interviews, questionnaires, content analysis and observation. Mentors are in a position to identify the following:

a. mentee's needs – academic, personal and social;

b. their own training needs;

c. as people giving voice to mentee concerns, mentors are able to highlight weaknesses in the institution;

d. the organisation and planning of the programme;

e. the performance of the co-ordinators;

f. the needs of academic staff; and

g. ways in which the programme can be improved.

2.4.10.c Feedback from Faculty/Other Officials

Ultimately, the purpose behind peer facilitated mentoring is to ensure that academic success is realised through a planned and purposive attempt at enhancing personal and social development. At the centre of this process is the transition or adjustment from school to university. The final arbiters of student performance must be lecturers (in addition to the student). Academics are often overlooked in evaluating the mentoring programme since they are seen to play a peripheral role. From the researcher's experience and observation (and in the researcher's development of the programme) the views, perceptions and judgements passed down by academics only served to build and strengthen the programme. While it may be difficult to identify a direct link between peer facilitated mentoring and academic performance, academic and student affairs personnel are in a position to identify the following useful pointers towards the development of the programme:

a. Often academics have more contact with mentors (most being senior students) and are in a position to make some judgement about mentor performance. This is invaluable, since it is difficult to supervise mentor performance all of the time. Further, given the nature of the peer relationship, the potential for abuse (sexual and otherwise) is rife.

b. In an indirect way, academic staff are able to informally evaluate the impact of mentoring on their own students' academic performance. This feedback normally

occurs in the corridors or at social events. While this cannot be classified as empirical evidence, it is most useful to know both the positive and negative aspects of the programme from people who are indirectly affected.

c. Academic staff is able to provide feedback on the content of mentoring programmes and point the mentors towards ways and means in which delivery can be improved.

2.5 SUMMARY

The definition and understanding of the concept of mentoring as a tool for educational development in higher education depends largely on how one perceives the role and purpose of higher education and universities in particular. A university is not a monolith with a single purpose defined by a single identity. Hence, its teaching and learning practices are defined by particular philosophies rooted largely in the political economy of the time. The practices of teaching and learning in higher education are thus bound by the dominant ethos and value system inherent in particular societies. The society's level of industrial development largely determines the technologies adopted in the transmission and dissemination of information and knowledge. However, the values espoused also determine the manner in which these technologies are utilised as tools for educational development. The current study endorses the role of peer facilitated mentoring as a viable alternative to traditional forms of teaching and learning in higher education. Evidence to support this has been provided in great detail. The study acknowledges the policy goals regarding the restructuring of higher education in South Africa, and takes as its point of departure the first year student experience of higher education as being alienating. The study has a strong race, class and gender bias and focuses on the psychosocial and academic needs of students in developing societies.

The concept of peer facilitated mentoring in higher education is brought to bear on patterns and trends in mentoring at South African universities. Two models of mentoring are presented – one being a macro organisational model and the other a micro operational

model. Against these models, the process of peer facilitated mentoring is outlined with emphasis on the four phases and three key focus areas of peer facilitated mentoring. Other aspects discussed include selection and recruitment of mentors, selection and recruitment of mentees, matching mentors to mentees, benefits of peer facilitated mentoring, some weaknesses of mentoring and the process of evaluating the programme.

The literature review has provided abundant information on the impact of mentoring in general and peer mentoring in particular. The literature review indicates the following gaps in research in the area of peer mentoring in higher education in the context of a developing society. The first includes the role of mentoring as compared to other forms of teaching delivery at institutions with particular reference to lectures and tutorials. The second relates to providing an in-depth evaluation of the impact of mentoring through the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry. Such a study has not as yet been undertaken. The third relates to the potential contribution this study makes to the examination of systemic processes underlying student development. The fourth factor attempts to provide more insight into the role of student leaders in the management and development of a peer mentor programme. At the time that the researcher was involved in the programme, a burning question from those not involved in the programme was: What does peer mentoring entail for first year students? Hence, the fifth factor relates to providing a more comprehensive account of how the peer mentor programme can give focus and stability to the first year experience of higher education. The current study aims to address the above gaps and complement existing research.

The issues raised under evaluation pave the way for the empirical investigation discussed in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The current study on the impact of peer facilitated mentoring on student development in higher education has been a challenging and rewarding experience. One particular challenge entailed the conceptualisation of the investigation around issues of alienation, liberation and cumulative social development vis-à-vis student academic development. Its discourse is critical and deep – which might not make it easily accessible to mainstream academia. The issues are framed within a particular historical and political period, coinciding with the evolution of a complex and intractable higher education system in South Africa, and thus opening up numerous possibilities for various interpretations and responses – both positive and negative.

The study has been a rewarding experience since the researcher had been directly involved in the initial implementation and co-ordination of the peer mentoring programme, cutting across all faculties and disciplines and leading the researcher into known and unknown areas. The current research seeks to provide educationally sound solutions to challenges in higher education in a developing society that aims to bring balance to issues of access and equity. The manner in which the hypothesis is tested and the interpretations derived play a central role – the biggest challenge being the selection of appropriate methods accompanied by a set of appropriate questions. Often, there is a tendency to seek new answers when established answers to existing problems do not seem to provide the desired results. This has been the popular response by stakeholders, as evidenced in the persistent treatment of educational problems residing solely within the student, as opposed to comprehending a wider systemic approach, dealing with challenges faced by both the student and the higher education sector. Instead of re-

examining the relevance of questions posed, there is a tendency to search for new answers. The problem of failure and attrition has generally consisted of establishing academic support initiatives – most of which have been fragmented, ad-hoc and not organically linked to the process of academic development. Yet, even in instances where such initiatives prove to be unsuccessful, institutions tend to apply alternative methods instead of re-examining whether the problem, and the manner it has come to be defined as a problem, truly reflects the real nature of the students' experiences.

The above view has been generated by the researcher's involvement in the programme, and based on the highly complex nature of institutional interpretation and perception of the challenges students are faced with. This type of institutional interpretation generally occurs in a vacuum – without regard for students' cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicity, the power relations inherent in language, discourse and gender, and the broader context of two cultures coming together – that of the students and that of the institution. In the course of evaluating the peer mentoring programme, the following challenges, as they emerge, need to be acknowledged and addressed in the research design.

3.2 SOME EMPIRICAL CHALLENGES AND COMPLEXITIES

Evaluation of the programme at the level of mentees and mentors was an annual requirement. Most of the formal evaluation was quantitative in nature and was executed by means of discussions and questionnaires. While it was difficult to interview each mentee/mentor, due to the large numbers of mentees and a lack of resources, some focus group interviews were nevertheless conducted. General conversations with mentors and mentees elicited a number of responses – most of which are not categorised or quantifiable. Focus group interviews were held with a group of Engineering mentors, as questions were better addressed by this form of inquiry. Based on the researcher's experience in administering questionnaires and conducting one-on-one and focus group interviews, the researcher finds that a number of challenges severely limit the validity of

the findings. These include the issues of language, race, class, gender, the researcher's bias and establishing which questions should be asked.

3.2.1 The Issue of Language

The researcher's biggest challenge centres around the **issue of language**. Students are mainly English second/third language speakers and the language of research is English. The concepts of alienation and peer mentoring are loaded with layers of meaning and interpretation – operationalising them for empirical study requires specialised skills. It cannot be taken for granted that questions are understood in the way it had been intended, and that the researcher is in fact interpreting the feedback according to the way the questions had been experienced or understood by the students. Moreover, questionnaires do not allow for much engagement with issues. The use of cultural metaphors, analogies and personification in attempts to explain ideas/meanings during focus group interviews often go amiss due to the researcher's inability to relate to students in their mother tongue. We believe that we have understood 'their' experience, but often it amounts to 'understanding' on the researchers' own terms. This creates difficulties in making qualitative judgements regarding the impact of peer mentoring on student development (Essack, 2003).

3.2.2 Race, Class and Gender

The student population is largely 'patriarchal' and 'male dominated' – according to the researcher's views. Issues of sexual equality, equity and voice become blurred in the conflict between the value systems of two cultures – Western/foreign and African/local. This conflict is evident in discussions on HIV-AIDS where student views on the cause and possible treatment of the disease differ from western notions. The issue of **race, class and gender** becomes a barrier if students perceive the researcher to come from the 'outside' – another 'race' coming from a privileged background. A lack of understanding of the **student's cultural background**, its associated values, the impact of values on the student's struggles to come to terms with a Eurocentric/Western curriculum (in form and

substance) are issues that need to be acknowledged in the research design. The subsequent impact of peer facilitated mentoring in bridging the gap between the school and university becomes politically and emotionally loaded and thus renders 'objective' judgement difficult (Essack, 2003).

3.2.3 The Researcher's Bias

Invariably the researcher's own values/worldview/bias tend to taint the interpretation of data. At the very least, the researcher and the programme appear to be patronising. Given this context, mentors and mentees are likely to show some form of resistance to issues that appear to be judgemental, condescending and paternalistic (Essack, 2003).

3.2.4 The Choice of Suitable Questions

Given the intensity and complexities of the mentoring process, it is difficult to establish whether one is indeed asking the right questions, whether students are providing relevant answers, or whether answers are deliberately couched in positive terms. The challenge lies in developing research skills in a diverse, multi-cultural educational setting, while examining the impact of a politically and socially complex process. In aiming to illuminate the object of analysis, Pillay (2003: 22-23) argues that: "If our answers to problems are not working, it may not mean that we should find new answers. It may mean that we are asking the wrong questions. So instead of giving old answers to old (and new) problems, we may need to be asking different questions about the post-colonial moment we live in." Given the dynamic nature of the peer mentoring process and its historical and political meaning, the manner in which questions/answers versus interpretation unfold, needs to be contextualised against the challenges outlined above.

Context determines the validity and reliability of the study when evaluating the combined influences of the peer mentoring process on student development. Context in the current study includes the student and the multiple environments he or she engages with, as well as the influence of these environments (one of which being the student mentorship

programme) on student development. Influence is felt at all levels (emotional, psychological, intellectual and physical). The empirical study therefore requires a method or a framework that incorporates, integrates and unifies all elements influencing student behaviour. With its focus on context-specific person-environment interaction, Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1993) ecological paradigm, or the human development ecology model, lends itself best to the empirical needs of the current study, since it offers a framework for understanding the influence of peer culture on student development. It accounts for both the outcomes and the processes of development by incorporating interactions of individuals with their environments over time in a Person-Process-Context-Time model.

3.3 BRONFENBRENNER'S PERSON-PROCESS-CONTEXT-TIME MODEL

Peer culture, as defined by Kuh (1995: 564) and described by Renn and Arnold (2003: 262) encompasses the forces and processes that shape individual and collective life on campus in terms of identity, group membership, acceptable discourse and desirable behaviours. They argue, "...that few scholars have examined how peer culture operates through the interaction of multiple individual environmental contexts" (Renn and Arnold, 2003: 262). The student mentorship programme places itself at the centre of these multiple environments and aims to integrate and unify the varying influences of multiple environments on 'a student' in a developmental and constructive manner. An understanding of peer culture helps to shape the curriculum of peer mentoring.

3.3.1 The Rationale Behind Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model

Peer facilitated mentoring is largely located around peers and their reciprocal influence on each other. Since this framework focuses on the core influences of peer culture, understanding peer culture is essential to improving quality undergraduate outcomes. Further, negative peer-influenced behaviour remains a cause for concern and insoluble for managers (Renn & Arnold, 2002: 273), since peers have a critical influence on college outcomes. While outcomes have been studied, the processes leading to such

outcomes have rarely been the focus of research. In fact, statistical analyses do not address how peer culture influences student learning and development (Renn & Arnold, 2002: 273). Regression techniques serve to isolate the effects of pertinent variables rather than investigate the synergistic interactions among traits and experiences. They fail to capture the continuing, cumulative interaction of student outcomes (Bourdieu, 1977). Examining reciprocal interactions between students and their environments provides a lens for understanding individuals in multiple layers and interacting environments, only some of which are encountered directly.

Given the challenges and complexities outlined in 3.1, the ecology model allows for an analysis of individual experience as well as the creation of peer groups and the processes of peer cultures. This enables practitioners in higher education to understand the reciprocal interacting effects of various sub-environments, levels of environments and students themselves. This model does not sacrifice the examination of processes, as it analyses outcomes and reveals which student characteristics relate to the degree and type of responsiveness to their different environments. It allows us to specify the processes by which these interactions produce change in individuals. Kuh (1990) concludes that before student cultures can be influenced, they must be discovered and understood. This research will add to the knowledge of research that link peer culture with college student behaviour and outcomes.

3.3.2 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model

Bronfenbrenner incorporated the work of Kurt Lewin, Lev Vygotsky and Gordon Allport into an ecological paradigm, capturing the context-specific person-environment interaction that "emerges as the most likely to exert influence on the course and content of subsequent psychological developments in all spheres" (Bronfenbrenner, 1993: 10). According to him:

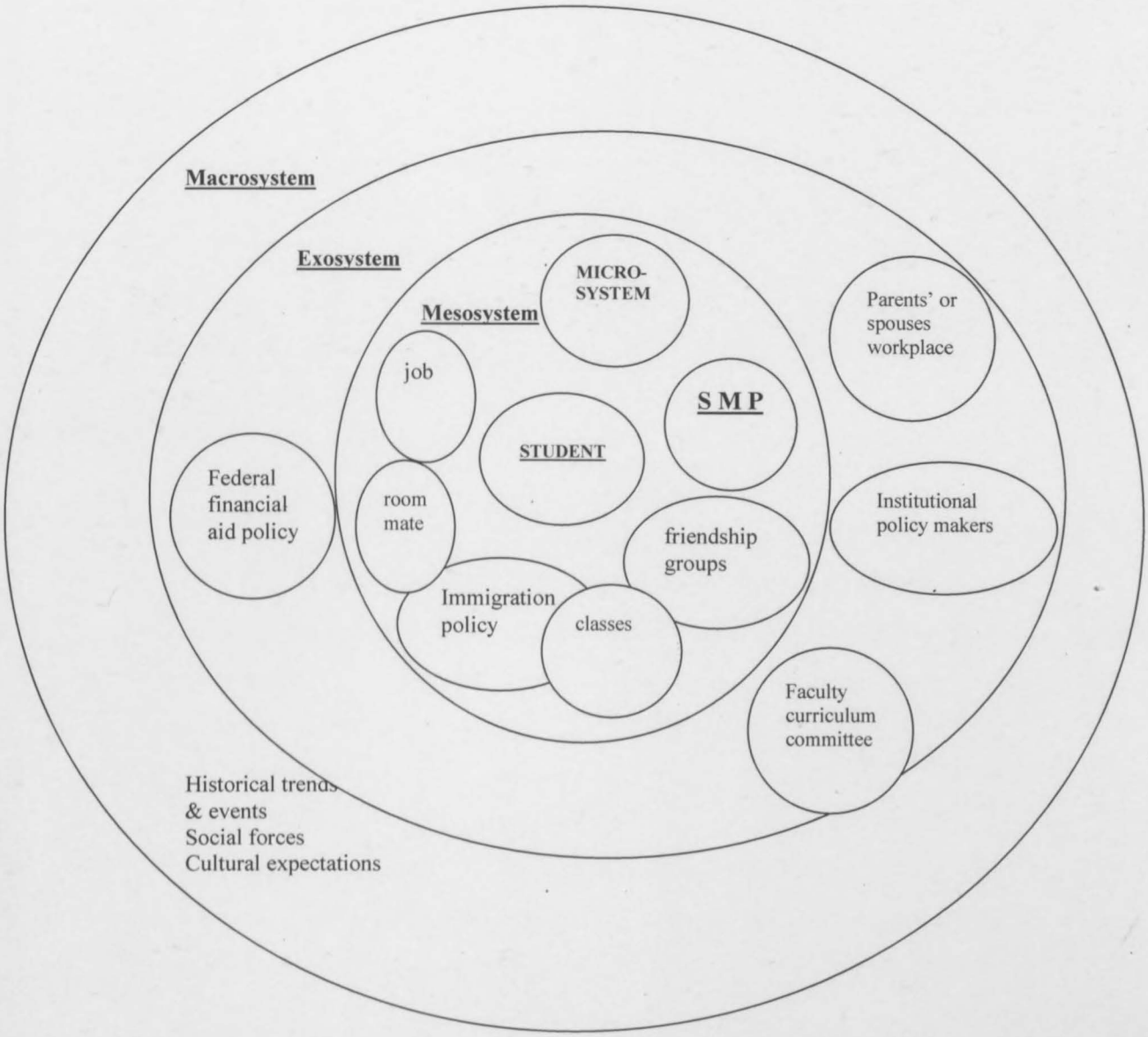
> "The ecology of human development is the scientific study of the progressive mutual accommodation, throughout the life course, between an active, growing human being, and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by the relations between these

> settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded (Bronfenbrenner, 1989: 188)."

His model thus focuses on the interactive, rather than additive effects of peer and family influences. It thus holds great potential for educational interventions designed to influence student behaviour. He rejects the view that attributes can be measured and examined outside the context of an individual's life, time and society. A major tenet of the model is that for development to occur, the individual must engage in increasingly complex actions and tasks that incorporate notions of involvement, challenge and support focusing on the processes, that is, the *how* and *why* of student development.

The model comprises microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems and macrosystems linked together in "a system of nested, interdependent, dynamic structures ranging from the proximal, consisting of immediate face-to-face settings, to the most distal, comprising broader social contexts such as classes and culture" (Bronfenbrenner, 1993: 4).

FIGURE 3.1: BRONFENBRENNER'S MODEL AS APPLIED TO A POSTSECONDARY ENVIRONMENT



(Bronfenbrenner, 1993:4)

The four systems describe the nested networks of interactions creating an individual's ecology. For each individual, this "person-process-context" ecology changes over time, through the process of the chronosystem, constituting the "person-process-context-time" (PPCT) model. The four dimensions are explained in the following discussion.

a. Person and Process

Underlying this theory are two axioms: that "development is an evolving function of person-environment interaction" and "that ultimately this interaction must take place in the immediate, face-to-face setting in which the person exists" (Bronfenbrenner, 1993: 10). The proximal development processes may occur between the individual and one or more others, or as a result of engagement in progressively more complex activities and tasks. This development process proposes that the attributes most likely to shape the course of development either positively or negatively, are those that induce or inhibit dynamic dispositions toward the immediate environment. These are referred to as developmentally instigative characteristics. He claims that these characteristics and the processes they invoke are the missing piece that explains the *how*, as well as the *what* of development. There are four types of developmentally instigative characteristics:

i. The first characteristic acts to invite or inhibit particular responses from the environment. For example, different students elicit particular responses from peers and faculty.

ii. The second characteristic is referred to as "selective responsitivity", or how individuals characteristically react to and explore their surroundings. For example, student preference for different kinds of activities.

iii. The third characteristic is referred to as "structuring proclivities" that relate to differences in how individuals engage or persist in increasingly complex activities, including reconceptualising and creating new features in the environment, for example, when students seek out activities that require increasing levels of critical thinking.

iv. The fourth characteristic, "directive beliefs", refers to how individuals view their agency in relation to their environments. For example, their belief regarding their understanding of the environment will determine their failure or success.

These characteristics form the basis upon which an interventionist programme such as peer mentoring should be designed. Embedded in the broader mentoring programme are possibilities and opportunities for guided and protected self-exploration, a rethinking of different value systems and deeper engagement with issues and activities that are otherwise overlooked or left unresolved. Unresolved issues create unneeded disjunctures and disengagement with positive aspects of the environment.

The differences in developmentally instigative characteristics account for some of the variability in student outcomes, regardless of such non-environmental characteristics as race, ethnicity, gender and age. While these characteristics do not determine the course of development, they are thought of 'putting a spin' on a body in motion – the effect of which depends on other forces and resources in the total ecological system. This is precisely where peer mentoring intervenes at critical stages and moments of development. The force-resource approach is useful in understanding how peer groups can influence development, by investigating how combinations of instigative traits and non-environmental characteristics (IQ, gender, family, resources) and developmentally instigative traits (motivation, intellectualism, self-efficacy) predispose students to choose academically oriented or socially oriented peer-groups.

b. Context

In the study of peer culture, the contextual elements of microsystems and mesosystems play a key role. Microsystems, according to Bronfenbrenner (1993: 10) are defined as:

> "...pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing persons in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social and symbolic features that invite, permit or inhibit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in, the immediate environment."

For example, the residence, cafeteria and library facilitate out-of-class activities ranging from the intellectual to the social. The microsystem differs for each individual, depending on their backgrounds and developmental trajectories. For interventions to be successful, this variability in individual experiences needs to be considered. The Student

Mentorship Programme aims to address precisely these experiences. Since the microsystem is the locus of proximal processes of development, the nature and membership of immediate settings raise important questions at this level of analysis (Renn & Arnold, 2002: 270-272).

The mesosystem is a web of involvements, comprising linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person. Attention is focused on the synergistic effects created by the interaction of developmentally instigative or inhibitory features and processes present in each setting. (Bronfenbrenner, 1993: 22). For example, students are embedded in interacting mesosystems of academic (Student Mentorship Programme), social, family and work life – each of which has developmental effects on students. The effects within and across systems may reinforce one another, or they may act against one another, drawing attention to the discrepancies and causing the student to confront contradictory processes and messages between individual microsystems.

Ecological niches are "specified regions in the environment that are especially favorable or unfavorable to the development of individuals with particular personal characteristics" (Bronfenbrenner, 1993: 18). For example, students will select institutions whose attitudes are congruent with institutional philosophies. Beyond the microsystem and mesosystem lie the exosystem and macrosystem. Exosystems exist where there is a setting not containing the individual, but nevertheless exerts an influence on the individual. These may include the parents' workplace, spouse's employment, policies of the government and the institution itself.

The macrosystem represents the most distal level of environmental influence, providing the overall framework for an individual's development potential. It consists of the overarching pattern of micro-, meso- and exosystems characteristic of a given culture, subculture, or other extended social structure, with particular reference to the developmentally instigative belief systems, resources, hazards, lifestyles, opportunity

structures, life course options and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in such overarching systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1993: 25).

c. Time

The element of time is represented in the chronosystem where "The individual's own developmental life course is seen as embedded in and powerfully shaped by conditions and events occurring during the historical period through which the person lives" (Bronfenbrenner, 1995: 641). Time can also be examined as it relates to the sequencing of events over an individual's life course, that is, the timing of biological and social transitions as they relate to the culturally defined age, role, expectations and opportunities occurring throughout the life course (Bronfenbrenner, 1995: 641). The psyche and worldview of students entering an institution are, like all things, shaped by the events in their lives. These events are almost always time-bound and students can therefore never be understood outside of the historical processes that shape them.

It is against the above ecology model of the "person-process-context-time" (PPCT) model that the impact of peer mentoring on student development is evaluated.

3.4 THE ROLE OF EVALUATION – QUANTITATIVE VERSUS QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

The definitions of evaluation abound. At its simplest, the following two definitions form the basis upon which the mentoring programme is evaluated. The first is Nevo's (1995: 4) definition: "An act of collecting systematic information regarding the nature and quality of educational objects." The second is Stake's (1967: 3) definition: "Both description and judgement are essential – in fact they are two basic acts of evaluation…To be fully understood the educational program must be fully described and fully judged." Chapter Two presents a description of the Student Mentorship Programme and Chapter Four provides a judgement. This process of evaluation is located within and between two paradigms – the quantitative and the qualitative. In terms of the quantitative

paradigm, social knowledge is seen as objective and measurable in a precise, quantitative manner. It is concerned with the use of numbers and statistics in describing and analysing the social world – the aim of which is to produce generalisable laws of human behaviour. In opposition to this paradigm, the qualitative paradigm views the social world as essentially different from the physical world. Since there is no one social reality, only the varying subjective interpretations of social reality held by individuals and groups, different people draw different meanings from different social contexts and experiences. Research helps us to understand and to gain insight into participants' meanings and interpretations. Against the above paradigms, the research methods adopted for the current study are participant observation, the 'focus group interview' and the 'questionnaire' – all of which will be discussed in detail in the following section on stages in the research process. The use of these three methods is called triangulation. Triangulation is defined as the use of two or more different methods or reference points in order to provide an angle (understanding) on the topic (Denscombe, 1998: 85-86). Denscombe (1998: 86) argues that the researcher should be encouraged to use more than one method and encouraged to recognize the value of using multi-methods for the corroboration of findings and enhancing the validity of data. However, the researcher needs to caution against the naïve use of triangulation since the existence of a single social reality is controversial.

3.5 STAGES IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Mouton (1996: 91-178) identifies the following stages in the research process:

- formulating the research problem (cases, variables, and relationships);
- formulating the research problem (research objectives);
- research design;
- conceptualisation (defining key concepts);
- conceptualisation (formulating research hypothesis);
- operationalisation;
- sampling;
- data collection (data sources, reactivity and control);

- data collection (sources of error);
- data collection (ensuring reliability);
- data analysis and interpretation; and
- writing the research report.

Each of the above stages, as it pertains to the current study, will be discussed.

3.5.1 Formulating the Research Problem – Cases, Variables and Relationships

Essentially, formulating the research problem consists of two key tasks. The first is specifying the unit of analysis in terms of what will be studied. The second includes clarifying the research objective or purpose in terms of the "why" of the study (Mouton, 1996:91). The unit of analysis in the current study is the Student Mentorship Programme, with the sub-units being the (faculty) co-ordinators, the mentor and the mentee. The purpose of this research encompasses a series of questions. The current study may not necessarily answer all of these questions. However, these questions need to be acknowledged, since they serve to direct the research. These questions are:

a. What is the student's experience of university (especially in their first year) and what factors determine the kinds of choices students make as to whether they should remain within the higher education system or exit the system before the completion of their studies?

b. Current systems of teaching and learning are unable to deal effectively with such experiences of disengagement and alienation.

c. What is the nature of the student's experience of alienation from the dominant, mainstream and super-structural forms of the university? This would include the entire gamut of the academic programme (content, method of instruction, language of instruction, forms of assessment, the culture of reading/writing/numeracy, communications, etc.), peer support structures, residential life, other formal support mechanisms, the culture of an urban setting

versus a rural/traditional background and the impact of market/Western influence on their behaviour.

c. Can one identify and analyse the cause of this alienation and locate it within the following?

- The legacy of apartheid education and its profound and enduring impact on the education system manifesting itself in a fragmented and skewed form of black education where black schools continue to be under-developed in critical areas such as science and technology (at the level of student and teacher) and literacy thereby producing students who are completely under-prepared for the demands of a sophisticated higher education system.

- The effects of apartheid and a capitalist economy on the social and economic lives of students manifesting itself in single parent homes, extreme conditions of poverty, rural based families and largely uneducated, semi-skilled parents who have neither the economic means nor the relevant cultural capital to support their children through the education system. Presently, most first year black students within the higher education system are first generation students who are expected to negotiate the varying and diverse challenges within the higher education system.

d. Peer facilitated mentoring is about the enhancement of student potential. The issues one needs to consider are factors that lead to the success of peer facilitated mentoring, the complex and demanding role of the mentor in realising the goals of mentoring and the complex profile of mentees against the outline given above.

e. Provided the necessary infrastructure for the realisation of the goals of mentoring is in place, the mentor singularly determines the success/failure of mentoring. To what can this be attributed in terms of the attributes (personality, commitment, dedication and expertise) of the mentor, the conditions under which this is accomplished and the training and workshops provided for mentor development?

f. Can it be argued that the process of mentoring junior students, together with the weekly training and development workshops, contributes to the professional development of mentors? To what extent does this process contribute to the professional development of mentors?

g. What are the benefits – short-term and long-term – of mentoring in terms of enhancing organisational effectiveness and institutional stability?

h. Does peer facilitated mentoring contribute to student success and retention?

The primary means of collecting data will be the administration and assessment of responses provided in questionnaires administered to mentees and faculty co-ordinators, and the focus-group interview conducted with mentors.

Section A in both the questionnaires and the focus group interview consists of independent variables, which are quantitative and qualitative. In the mentee questionnaire the quantitative variables include age, gender and the faculty they belong to. At this stage, it is not possible to state the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

3.5.2 Formulating the Research Problem – Research Objectives

The current study is based on the following hypotheses:

a. Higher education is essentially an alienating experience for first generation and first year students.

b. Peer facilitated mentoring in the form of academic, social and personal mentoring contributes towards three key issues:

- alleviating the first year student's experience of alienation at different levels of institutional life within the higher education system;
- contributing towards enhancing a student's academic, social and personal skills;
- invariably increasing student success and retention at the first year level;
- contributing to the professional development of mentors; and
- contributing toward strengthening the organisational effectiveness of the institution.

Mouton (1996: 103) identifies four generic kinds of studies. These studies are also referred to as ideal types and include exploratory studies, replication studies, hypothesis-generating studies and theory-testing studies. The current study is exploratory, as well as hypothesis-generating and hypothesis-testing. It is exploratory since it aims to establish the facts, gather new data and determine whether there are new issues to be dealt with. It is hypothesis-generating in the sense that the empirical part of the study would allow for the generation of a number of hypotheses. It is hypothesis-testing since it aims to test a hypothesis.

On the basis of the hypothesis, the following goals have been formulated:

a. To provide an analysis of the factors that gave rise to the levels of under-preparedness of university students in South Africa, especially previously marginalised (mainly black) students.

b. To provide an analysis of factors that contribute toward student alienation in higher education by compiling an extensive account of the first year experience of university life, its accompanying challenges and the complex needs of first year university students, as well as the subsequent need for peer facilitated mentoring. This would include detailing the demands of the mainstream university culture in terms of the conditions under which curriculum, administration and social

conditions function and the subsequent need for and potential impact of peer facilitated mentoring.

c. To locate the analysis within the theoretical framework of Mann's perspective on students' experiences of alienation and engagement in higher education.

d. To outline the definitions, process and model/s of peer facilitated mentoring in higher education.

e. To assess and evaluate the role of peer facilitated mentoring in the institutionalised form of the Student Mentorship Programme (SMP) at the Westville campus University of Kwa-Zulu Natal by:
   - evaluating mentors' and mentees' experience of this process in respect of their academic, personal and social development with specific reference to their experience of alienation and engagement;
   - evaluating how the mentoring process contributes towards the professional development of mentors;
   - assessing whether SMP contributed in any significant way to student success and retention; and
   - assessing how SMP contributed towards the effective functioning of the institution.

Mouton (1996: 104) states that research is also motivated by factors other than the research objectives mentioned above. These factors are called cognitive interests and they relate to the sociological dimension. Other factors that have motivated this study include:

- institutional concerns;
- giving voice to student concerns; and
- completing a post-graduate degree.

3.5.3 Research Design

The above definitions of the research problem are crucial to the design of the research. According to Mouton (1996: 107): "The development of a research design thus follows logically from the research problem. A 'research design' is defined as 'a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the research problem'. The main function of a research design is to enable the researcher to anticipate what the appropriate research decisions should be so as to maximise the validity of the eventual results." The issue of validity and reliability is central to any empirical study. Validity and reliability are best achieved by planning and structuring a research project in such a way that the final validity of the research findings are maximised through minimising and/or eliminating potential error.

The notion of validity needs to be explored in terms of its links with approximating truths and the process by which one recognises valid research. Mouton (1996: 109) claims that without having a clear idea of what the criteria of validity are, one cannot define the function of research design as 'maximising validity'. Validity applies to the whole research process. Therefore, the following will have to be explained in each stage of the research process:

- the major sources of error – threats to validity;
- the particular 'outcomes' or 'products' of that stage in the research process; and
- the appropriate criterion of validity as it applies to that outcome.

The following stages in the research process will be discussed, the sources of error will be identified, and the outcomes and the appropriate criterion of validity as it applies to that outcome will be presented.

3.5.4 Conceptualisation – Formulating Key Concepts

Conceptualisation is the process by which key concepts are defined in the problem statement (Mouton, 1996: 114). In this regard, a comprehensive working definition of

alienation in higher education and peer facilitated mentoring is provided in Chapters One and Two. The need for conceptualising is to provide clarification, to assist in conceptual analysis and to allow for the measurement of the variables that one wishes to study. Chapter Two provides further clarification on the nature of student alienation in higher education, the peer facilitated mentoring process, its political and philosophical nature, its implementation in higher education and its relevance for a third-world, developing higher education context. Given the range of interpretations of any one of the concepts, attempts were made to remain as closely as possible to the definitions provided in the literature.

3.5.5 Conceptualisation – Formulating the Research Hypothesis

Conceptualisation involves embedding or incorporating one's study into the body of knowledge that is relevant to the research problem being addressed (Mouton, 1996: 119). This is the **outcome** of this stage. To meet this objective, the researcher undertook a thorough literature search of previous theoretical and empirical work. Relevant information was identified and incorporated into the study. According to Mouton (1996: 119), literature reviews are important because they:

- serve to map the terrain;
- provide guidelines and suggestions on the design of the research;
- provide various kinds of resources like conceptual and methodological resources, and examples of qualitative and quantitative techniques;
- assist in the replication of previous research; and
- allow one to learn by studying related fields and the designs and methods used.

The literature review played a significant role in allowing the researcher to identify the parameters within which peer mentoring in higher education has been researched. It provided many conceptual resources for constructing a coherent argument to support peer facilitated mentoring, and it gave invaluable insight into the kind of research design to be adopted to best meet the needs of the study.

Creswell (1994: 20-21) identifies other purposes of a literature review. These include:

- providing results of other studies that are closely related to the study;
- relating a study to the larger, ongoing dialogue in the literature and field of study;
- filling in gaps and extending prior studies;
- providing a framework for establishing the importance of the study; and
- providing a benchmark for comparing the results of a study with other studies.

On the basis of other studies on peer mentoring in higher education, it was possible to formulate a hypothesis within the context of current debates in higher education. The literature review was especially useful in clarifying conceptual issues, as the latter relate to peer facilitated mentoring and student alienation. The literature review also indicates that the concept of alienation has a wider application, even in higher education. For the researcher, the various meanings attached to student alienation and its strong link with peer mentoring were especially useful. It served to fill in the conceptual gaps on student academic development, by linking this process to a rationale that transcends the context of the classroom. The current study, by its very nature, is an extension of other studies, and serves as a basis from which future research can be developed. It has the potential to generate new and relevant hypotheses.

The literature review indicates that its importance lies in its ability to provide a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of students' experiences of alienation and peer facilitated mentoring. Neuman (1997: 91) believes that a literature review is important, since it demonstrates a familiarity with a body of knowledge and establishes credibility. It also integrates and summarises what is known in a particular area; allows one to learn from others; and acts as a catalyst in stimulating new ideas.

The current study accessed the following kinds of sources for its literature review.
- primary texts, such as books, dictionaries, encyclopaedias;
- secondary texts, such as journals, reviews, university calendars and conference papers;
- written student feedback since 1999;
- internet and the e-mail;
- attendance at conferences;

- presenting papers at conferences – both locally and internationally;
- participation at workshops;
- conducting mentor training workshops;
- informal conversations with mentors, mentees and others; and
- newspaper articles.

The researcher also presented several papers, drawn from the current study, at the following conferences: International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED June-July, 2002 in Australia) ; XV World Congress of Sociology of the International Sociology Association (ISA) (July, 2002 in Australia), South African Sociological Association, Annual Congress (July 2001 in Durban), the European Association for Research into Instruction and Learning (EARLI) for junior researchers (JURE) (July 2003 in Italy), the European Association for Research into Instruction and Learning (EARLI) (August 2005 in Cyprus).

In terms of counteracting **sources of error**, attempts were made to consult as many primary and secondary sources as possible. Attempts were also made to consult books and journals published over the last five to ten years. A variety of both local and international literature was reviewed. Therefore, the appropriate **criterion of validity,** as it applies to this stage, is based on the level of the source (primary and secondary), year of publication and a balance between locally and internationally produced texts.

3.5.6 Operationalisation – The Questionnaire, the Focus Group Interview and Participant Observation

Operationalisation entails linking the key concepts in the problem statement to the actual phenomena to be studied. This linkage is achieved by constructing a measuring instrument (Mouton, 1996: 125). In this study, a questionnaire, fixed response questions and a five-point Likert scale are used as measuring instruments. The focus group interview entails an evaluation of the responses given by mentors.

An important aspect of operationalisation is that it needs to comply with the requirements of measurement validity. There are two types of measurement validity: criterion validity and construct validity. Criterion validity has both predictive value and concurrent value. Construct validity "...refers to the extent to which a scale, index or list of items measures the relevant item and not something else" (Mouton, 1996: 128). The aim of the current study is not to predict something, but to evaluate the impact of the peer facilitated mentoring programme on student academic development in higher education. To this end, constructs that measure specific variables/concepts have been identified. These will be presented in detail in the discussion on the construction of questions for the questionnaire and the focus group interview. The operationalisation concept of alienation was a challenging task, and one that required much thought.

According to Mouton (1996:130) the theoretical validity and measurement validity of concepts enjoy a very close relationship, and valid measurement presupposes adequate conceptual explanation. The literature review has thus laid the basis for a sound empirical research.

3.5.6.a The Mentee Questionnaire

The questionnaire and the focus group interview were used to complement each other. The questionnaire is an instrument of survey research (Neuman, 1997: 231). A survey research consists of sampling many respondents who answer the same question, while the questionnaire measures many variables, tests multiple hypotheses, and draws inferences about past behaviour, experiences and characteristics. A deductive approach is applied by beginning with a theoretical or applied research problem and ending with empirical measurement and data analyses.

The advantages of self-administered questionnaires, according to Neuman (1997: 251), are:

- questionnaires can be given directly to respondents;
- respondents can fill in the questionnaire in their own time and at their own convenience;

- it is cheap and can be conducted by a single researcher;
- a larger number of people can be tested;
- the degree of anonymity is increased; and
- the response could be high.

The disadvantages of the self-administered questionnaire are:
- the response rate could be low;
- the researcher cannot control the conditions under which the questionnaire is completed;
- the researcher is not present to clarify information or to probe for more information when respondents give the wrong answers; and
- it is not possible to observe the respondents' physical reactions (Neuman, 1997: 251).

The literature review and the researcher's involvement in the programme guided the selection and nature of questions. The researcher constructed the questions, which were then edited by the study leader and the co-study leader. Each questionnaire had instructions as to how it should be completed. A pilot study of the questionnaire was carried out in April 2004. On the basis of this pilot study questions in items were refined, amended and/or eliminated. The final questionnaire was constructed around May 2004 and implemented between June 2004 and July 2004. Respondents completed the questionnaires in their own time and on their own. The researcher administered some of the questionnaires. Other questionnaires were administered by a very responsible faculty co-ordinator, Ruth Kibirige, who posted the remainder of the questionnaires to the researcher. The importance of the study was impressed upon mentees. In the event of any queries, students could make use of the contact numbers provided by the researcher.

The form of the questions ranged from fixed response questions, nominal measures (age, gender, ranking), ordinal measures, open-ended qualitative questions and the Likert scale. The Likert scale measures the relative intensity of different items on a scale from one to five. It then calculates the average index score for each item. The Likert scale is one of the most commonly used in contemporary questionnaire design (Babbie, 1998: 184). It

has been used in the current study, since it is seen to serve the requirements of a study that evaluates the impact of one variable on another.

The following discussion provides a description and rationale for the inclusion of particular items in the questionnaire. For ease of reading and understanding, the rationale is further developed in Chapter Four The mentee questionnaire (Appendix A) is divided into three sections. Section A, B and C – section A contains questions 1 to 11, Section B questions 12-16 and Section C questions 17-30.

Section A requires information on the following independent variables; age, race, gender, nationality, physical challenge, faculty, previous educational experience, linguistic background and family background. Given the significant demographic changes in higher education, it is essential to identify the predominant age group that students fall into. The same would apply to gender, nationality and physical challenge, especially in the current context of transformation in higher education in South Africa where attempts are being made to attract more black, female and physically challenged students. The variable of previous educational experience as preparation for higher education ties in closely with performance at university. Performance at university is further influenced by a range of factors – one of which is the nature of environment. Hence the need to compare previous educational experience, as the demands of higher education and the importance of peer facilitated mentoring are seen as crucial to the current study.

The significance of mentees' linguistic background to the present study is that it would cast light on issues like the effectiveness of English as a medium of instruction and its links to student alienation. Attention should be paid to the fact that most students at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal are English second, third and even fourth language speakers and therefore experience challenges in mastering the content of an English medium curriculum. Language plays a pivotal role in the curriculum. It is the primary means of academic communication and determines the process of conceptualisation. Many academics perceive the high failure rate and the lowering of standards in terms of language and educational under-preparedness. It is

essential, therefore, to incorporate the language issue with student academic development and peer facilitated mentoring.

One of the bigger challenges facing higher education in South Africa is the students' poor socio-economic background. Question 9 aims to ascertain the level of joint family income, while question 10 aims to ascertain parents' and guardians' type of employment and question 11 aims to ascertain parents' and guardians' level of education. A comparison can therefore be drawn between socio-economic background and academic success.

Section B aims to investigate the concept of alienation in higher education and student experience of peer facilitated mentoring across all faculties. Questions 12 to 14 are clustered around issues like the choice of a degree and preparation for a career. Question 15 looks at the student experience of university in the first few weeks. Question 16 enquires the issue of alienation against the 7 aspects of alienation, as outlined by Mann (2001). There are twenty items in this question and mentees are required to give a rating, on the Likert scale, from Fully Agree (5), Agree (4), Average (3), Disagree (2) or Fully Disagree (5). The researcher would like to add that the design of these questions has been a challenging task, since operationalising the concept of alienation is a complex issue. In order to deal with this issue, the researcher identified two opposing dimensions – one of engagement and the other of disengagement. Thirty-three items covering the personal, social and academic dimensions were identified. Items selected to test the construct of alienation looked at student experience within the continuum of whether "an experience" was engaging or disengaging.

Section C aims to examine the full influence of the Student Mentorship Programme on students' personal, social and academic development. Through the use of the Likert scale, mentees are required to rate a number of items related to pre-registration orientation, orientation, personal, social and academic mentoring. The items on personal and social mentoring have been clustered together. Question 18 looks at how mentees prioritise academic, personal and social mentoring. They are required to indicate the

degree of importance of academic, personal and social mentoring with 1 representing the most important, 2 the second most important and 3 the third most important. Question 19 looks at the most common language of communication between mentors and mentees. Question 20 looks at whether mentees would recommend the Student Mentorship Programme to other students. The response categories for this question are yes, no and unsure. Question 21 and 22 are clustered around the strengths and weaknesses of the Student Mentorship Programme. Mentees are required to list the 5 strengths and 5 weaknesses of the programme. Leading from this question, question 23 aims to identify improvements that mentees would like to see in the programme. This is an open-ended qualitative question. Question 24 is an indirect assessment of the Student Mentorship Programme by way of asking mentees if they would consider being mentors. Questions 25 and 26 are clustered around the best and worst qualities of a mentor. Here mentees are required to identify the three best and the three worst qualities of a mentor. Questions 27 and 28 assess whether peer facilitated mentoring can significantly improve the student pass rate and whether participation in the programme can increase student retention. Question 29 aims to investigate mentee perception of the various roles enacted by mentors. These roles are defined for mentees and they are required to indicate the extent to which they agree with the definitions provided on a Likert scale from 1 to 5. The roles include opportunity provider, interpreter, process consultant, learning consultant, coach and counsellor. Question 30 requires a brief narrative on the student's experience of the Student Mentorship Programme. This is an open-ended and qualitative question. It is also optional.

3.5.6.b The Focus Group Interview

The focus group interview was used to collect data from mentors. There are three uses to the focus group interview: used as a self-contained method, used as a supplementary source and used in multi-method studies (Morgan, 1997: 3).

The self-contained method, which serves as the principal source of qualitative data, was selected because it provides the basis for a complete study. It is a technique that collects

subjective information through group interaction and lends itself well to the needs and goals of the current study. Morgan (1997: 13) identifies two defining features of the focus group interview. One is the reliance on the researcher's focus and the second is the group's interaction. The advantage of relying on the researcher's focus is the ability to produce concentrated amounts of data on precisely the topic of interest, access to a wide range of topics that are not observable and its relative efficiency. It is also useful in exploring new research areas or examining well-known research questions from the research participant's own perspective. For the marginalised student, this method gives voice to concerns that are too easily ignored or pushed to the periphery of academic life. Stewart and Shamdasani (1990: 103) claim that the focus group interview is useful as an evaluative tool and for testing the reality of assumptions that goes into the design of services, programmes and products. This method is useful in providing a first step towards a more detailed study and analysis of the impact of the peer facilitated mentoring programme.

Morgan (1997: 17) claims that the preference for focus group interviews over other qualitative methods is to "...ask how actively and easily participants would discuss the topic of interest." One of the challenges the researcher faced when conducting the interview was difficulty in controlling the discussion, since it tended to become emotional. Not knowing whether the interpretation of results is too judgemental and subjective. creates some uncertainty. Further, being too close to the programme makes one lose sight of factors such as objectivity and the researcher's own bias.

Mentors are taken through a series of developmental workshops with the aim of enhancing their ability to mentor first year students. A key selection criteria and focus of their training is building their communication skills. Since peer mentoring is a team approach led by a mentor, team building workshops are held regularly. By the time the programme is evaluated, most mentors are forthcoming in voicing their opinions and relate well to each other. In their training, mentors were exposed to a range of mentoring skills – all of which sharpened their understanding of the teaching and learning process.

There were three group sessions with ± 5 mentors per group. The following questions (Refer to Appendix B) guided the focus group discussions.

a. How would you describe the needs of first year students?
b. How do faculty mentors see the broader purpose of mentoring?
c. How do faculty mentors see the objectives of mentoring?
d. How do faculty mentors define and describe their roles as mentors?
e. How do faculty mentors actually practise mentoring?
f. What are your views on the planning, organisation and implementation of the Student Mentorship Programme (SMP)?
g. What is your experience of the capacity building workshops for mentors?
h. Did your participation in the mentorship programme as a mentor contribute to your professional development?
i. Does SMP help in advancing the goals of the institution?
j. What are the weaknesses, pitfalls and problem areas?

The questions posed to mentors are largely based around the purpose of mentoring as experienced by mentors in relation to the needs of first year students. These include their understanding of the definition, description and practice of mentoring. The capacity building workshops held, the administration and management of the programme, the contribution of mentorship to their own professional development, the role of peer mentoring in advancing the goals of the institution and the pitfalls and the weaknesses of the programme also formed the basis for the discussion.

3.5.6.c The Questionnaire Administered to Faculty Coordinators

By far one of the gravest challenges in ensuring the success of any programme or project, is the manner of its administration and implementation. Planning, setting of goals and objectives and the type of leadership are factors that either advance the goals of the programme or hamper progress. To this end, it is significant that the layer of middle managers be assessed for their views. This questionnaire (Refer to Appendix C) is divided into five sections. Section A requires information on the following independent

variables: race, gender, nationality, highest qualification and duration of employment in the current post. Section B looks at the administration of the programme in terms of planning, organisation, management, leadership, supervision, control and authority. Definitions are provided for each one of the concepts assessed and respondents are required to describe the effectiveness of each. Section C looks at the issue of infra-structure and resource allocation and assesses whether resources allocated are sufficient to meet the goals of the programme. Section D is an evaluatory section which requires respondents to rate the level of effectiveness of the programme on a 5-point Likert scale. Section E has one open-ended question, which requires respondents to provide recommendations for the future.

3.5.6.d Participant Observation

The empirical part of the current study, that is, the implementation of the questionnaire and the focus group interview was conducted between April 2004 and August 2004. Since the researcher was involved in the peer mentor programme from 1999, it must be acknowledged that in many respects the researcher was also involved in the daily happenings of the programme. As such, it is difficult to separate the researcher's observations of activities from the interpretation attached to the findings. The researcher must therefore include participant observation as a method of investigation. Participant observation as defined by Becker & Greer (1957: 28) is a method in which the observer participates in the daily life of the people under study either openly or covertly. In this context, the researcher observes things that happen, listen to what is said and question people over a period of time. The aim of participant observation is to gain insights into an event by experiencing it as an insider. The event is experienced as a whole and different parts are examined in relation to their context. Such experience affords the researcher to deal with the meaning of actions from the participant's point of view and focus on the depth rather than the breadth of data (Denscombe, 1998:149).

Denscombe (1998: 148) further claims that the key priorities of participant observation is to preserve the naturalness of the setting and to gain information of events that would

otherwise remain hidden if the researcher adopted other methods. As compared to other methods, the greatest benefit of participant observation is that it allows for reflection on the detail, the subtleties, the complexity and the interconnectedness of the event under investigation. To this end, it scores highly in terms of the validity of the data. Participant observation was used throughout the empirical study – from observing mentors and mentees in consultation to questioning both on their experience of mentoring. In addition to the questionnaire and the focus group interview, participant observation serves to triangulate the use of empirical methods.

3.5.7 Sampling

The aim of sampling in research is to obtain a representative selection of the population. Its significance lies in its ability to be representative of the population so that valid generalisations can be made from the analysis (Mouton, 1996: 132-136). A sample is generally taken from a population when it is impossible or practically difficult to study every single individual from the population. The sample is selected from the frame, which consists of the list of all the units from the population to be surveyed. The frame should contain all the units of the population under consideration, referred to as the **target population** (Rao, 2000: 5). There are three sets of populations in the current study – the mentee population, the mentor population and the population of faculty co-ordinators. The current study utilises the following types of sampling:

- stratified, simple, quota random sampling for mentors; and
- stratified, proportionate, unequal, weighted, quota sampling for mentees.

Each of the above will be discussed in the following discussion.

According to Sampath (2000: 76), "In simple random sampling, it has been seen that the precision of the standard estimator of the population total (the mean) depends on two aspects, namely, the sample size and the variability of the character being studied. Therefore, in order to obtain an estimator with increased precision, one can increase the sample size. However, considerations of cost limit the size of the sample. The other possible way to estimate the population total (mean) with greater precision is to divide

the population into several groups, each of which is more homogeneous than the entire population and draw a sample of predetermined size from each of these groups. The groups into which the population is divided is called strata, and drawing a sample from each of the strata is called sampling. In stratified sampling, samples are drawn independently from different strata and it is not necessary to use the same sampling design in all strata. Depending on the nature of the strata, different sampling designs can be used in different strata. For example, in the absence of suitable size information, simple random sampling can be used in few strata, whereas probability proportional to size sampling can be used in the remaining strata when size information is available in those strata." In the current study, a stratified proportionate weighted quota sample is drawn from the mentee population, while a stratified simple quota random sample is used for the mentor population. A sample is not drawn for the population of faculty co-ordinators, since the population is small enough to be interviewed.

a. Sampling applied to mentors - stratified, simple, quota random sampling

To select a simple random sample, researchers need a complete listing of the members of the study population. The sample can be determined by selecting a random start in a table of random numbers (Henry, 1990: 97). Random sampling always involves probability sampling. According to Singleton, et al. (1988: 137), 'random' describes something that occurs or is done without plan or choice; random events or choices are haphazard or non-deliberate. As used in sampling, however, 'random' has a more specific, technical meaning. It refers to a process that gives each case in the population an equal chance of being included in the population. This means that the characteristics of cases are irrelevant to their selection, and that the selection of one case has no bearing whatsoever on the selection of another case." A **simple random quota sample** of ten percent was applied to the population of mentors from within each strata.

b. Sampling applied to mentees - stratified, proportionate, unequal, weighted, quota sampling

The mentee population was much larger and more complex. The challenge was to achieve an equal proportional representation. Bailey (1987: 100) claims that the only way to ensure that all groups from different strata are equally represented, is through unequal weighting. Proportionate representation can be achieved by noting the probability of selection for a group and assigning a weight equal to the inverse of this probability of selection.

An advantage of probability sampling is that it removes the possibility of bias on the part of the investigator, while the laws of mathematical probability may be applied to estimate the accuracy of the sample (Singleton, et al., 1988: 137). Since it was not possible to administer questionnaires to the members of all actively engaged mentee populations, a **stratified proportionate unequal weighted quota sampling** procedure was applied to the population of mentees (1331), while a stratified quota sampling procedure was applied to the population of mentors (145). A sample was not taken from the population of faculty co-ordinators, which totalled 4. Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 explain the procedure by which the type of sampling was applied.

TABLE 3.1

BREAKDOWN OF FIRST YEAR STUDENTS AND MENTEES ACROSS ALL FACULTIES AT THE WESTVILLE CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF KWA-ZULU NATAL AND NUMBER OF MENTEES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE SAMPLE

FACULTY	NUMBER OF FIRST YEAR STUDENTS PER FACULTY	% OF FIRST YEAR STUDENTS PER FACULTY	NUMBER OF MENTEES	% OF MENTEES PER FACULTY	WEIGHTED QUOTA SAMPLE OF MENTEES
Commerce & Management	1060	34%	468	35%	47
Engineering	202	7%	150	12%	16
Health Sciences	244	8%	161	12%	16
Humanities	695	23%	225	17%	23
Law	152	5%	149	11%	15
Science	708	23%	178	13%	17
TOTAL	3061	100%	1331	100%	134

(SOURCE: STATISTICS FROM CENTRAL ADMISSIONS OFFICE AT THE WESTVILLE CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF KWA-ZULU NATAL, 2004 AND RECORDS AT THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP OFFICE)

Table 3.1 indicates the population (and percentage) of first year students and the number of first year students (and percentage) participating in the student mentorship programme within different faculties, at the Westville Campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. The faculties include Commerce and Management, Engineering, Health Science, Humanities, Law and Science. The numbers and percentages of first year students participating in the programme are indicated in the fourth and fifth column. The researcher decided to administer questionnaires to ten percent of the mentee population, which equals 134. A **porportionate weighted quota sample** from the total of 134 was drawn from the population of participating mentees for each strata (faculty), and this appears in the sixth column. For example, 10% of 468 gives a total of 47 mentees who are selected from the Faculty of Commerce and Management.

TABLE 3.2

NUMBER OF MENTORS SELECTED PER DISCIPLINE INCLUDING GENDER BREAKDOWN

FACULTY	NO. OF MENTORS	GENDER BREAKDOWN OF MENTORS		TEN PERCENT QUOTA SAMPLE	NUMBER OF MALE AND FEMALE MENTORS TO BE INTERVIEWD	
		MALE	FEMALE		MALE	FEMALE
Commerce & Management	41	19	22	4	2	2
Engineering	20	19	1	2	2	1
Health Sciences	16	3	13	2	1	1
Humanities	27	13	14	3	1	1
Law	21	18	13	2	1	1
Science	20	13	7	2	1	1
TOTAL	145	75	70	15	8	7

A stratified quota random sampling procedure was applied to mentors. This was carried out by identifying the number of mentors per strata, within each faculty. The strata had been identified in terms of faculties: Commerce & Management, Engineering, Health Sciences, Humanities, Law and Science. Ten percent of mentors, per strata, were selected for the study. This number is shown in column four. Column three indicates the gender breakdown. From the gender breakdown an equal number of male and female mentors were selected for the focus group interview. The above is a stratified proportionate random sampling method where a 10% quota of respondents from each strata will form part of the focus group interview. A specific variable that was isolated was gender, since gender is seen to play a significant role in advancing the goals of peer mentoring. A 10% sample is the norm in social science research (Trochim, 2001:50) and therefore acceptable for the current study.

3.5.8 Data Collection – Data Sources, Reactivity and Control

The term reactivity refers to the "...phenomenon that human beings react to the fact that they are participants in research" (Mouton, 1996: 141). In the current study, this reaction could manifest itself in one or more of the following ways:

- resistance to completing the questionnaire;
- supplying inaccurate information as a result of apathy;

- modifying behaviour and/or information to create a better impression;
- wanting to look favourable;
- inability on the part of the researcher to appropriately interpret questions; and
- deliberate misinformation.

Attempts to control the above forms of reactivity in the current study include:
- a random selection of the sample;
- the use of appropriate statistical techniques;
- explaining the importance of the study to the respondents;
- winning over the trust and confidence of the respondents by displaying professionalism, courtesy and respect; and
- allowing for anonymity of respondents.

Controlling reactivity influences the reliability of the results. According to Mouton (1996: 144) reliability "...refers to the fact that different research participants being tested by the same instrument at different times should respond identically to the instrument."

In the current study reliability was influenced in the following way:
- triangulating the methods of inquiry to include participant observation, the questionnaire and the focus group interview; and
- combining both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Since reliability is a precondition for measurement, every effort has been made to ensure that the various sources of error have been reduced.

3.5.9 Data Collection – Sources of Error

Mouton (1996: 148) identifies the following sources of error in data collection. These elements pose a threat to the reliability of the data collected:

a. The affiliation, image and distance between the researcher and participant influence the collection of data. A researcher affiliated to a highly reputable organisation is likely to command more respect. The positive or negative perception that respondents have of the researcher will influence the researcher's image, which in turn will influence the respondent's attitude toward the questionnaire and the research. Therefore, the distance between the researcher and the respondent is bound to influence the quality of the responses.

b. Among participant effects, the following play a crucial role in influencing responses. These include the inability to recall, an attitude of knowing it all, the level of motivation of the participant, and response patterns where respondents are more likely to provide acceptable and desirable answers.

c. The context of the research includes a broader spatio-temporal context determined by historical, socio-political and economic factors and the narrower research setting within which the research is conducted. In the current study, cultural factors such as habits, traditions and customs of academia and mentors' perceptions of their role within the context of peer mentoring will influence their responses.

In attempts to address the above, the researcher explained the importance of the study in the introduction to each of the methods of investigation. Simple words like please and thank you also assisted in reducing the level of formality between the researcher and the participants.

3.5.10 Data Collection – Ensuring Reliability

Data was collected by a process of reviewing literature on issues pertaining to peer mentoring in higher education and the current status of the mentorship programme at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal.

The questionnaire and the focus group interview were the primary means of collecting data. The researcher, together with Ruth Kibirige, from the Student Mentorship Office, administered the questionnaires to each mentee and led the focus-group interview. The fieldwork started on 1 February 2004 and was completed by 30 July 2004. Respondents remained anonymous and every attempt was made to maintain professionalism and establish rapport with both mentors and mentees.

One hundred and thirty four questionnaires were administered to mentees, of which 101 were returned. The retrieval rate for students was 75%. Three focus group interviews were held with ± 5 mentors each. The participation was largely positive. In the researcher's view this was mainly possible for the following reasons:

a. In the years 1991 to 2001, the researcher's role in the university was such that it had a direct bearing on student development. This close and deep association with students allowed the researcher to reach out to mentors, mentees and faculty co-ordinators and gain their confidence.

b. Ms Kibirige ensured that those questionnaires that were taken home to be completed, were returned.

c. Faculty co-ordinators and mentors encouraged mentees to complete the questionnaires and mentors were encouraged by faculty co-ordinators to participate in the focus group interviews. The researcher was able to draw on this and remind mentors of the importance of the need for this research. All mentors identified participated in the focus-group interview.

The researcher wishes to add that some of the senior managers and middle managers were present at one of the focus group interviews. They include Professor Ngara, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs), Mr Trevor Wills (Dean of Students) and Dr. D Garside (Director of Quality Assurance). The management hopes to use the results of the study in the development of the university's strategic plan.

3.5.11 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis involves two steps "...reducing to manageable proportions the wealth of data that one has collected or has available; and second, identifying patterns and themes in the data" (Mouton, 1996: 161). The current study has a large quantitative component including fixed-set responses and a 5-point scale. The statistics are therefore descriptive and inferential. Responses were fed into the computer with the use of the Social Sciences Statistical Package.

With regard to the analysis of feedback obtained in the focus group interview, Stewart and Shamdasani (1990: 101) claim that there is no single or correct approach to collecting data and that "...the nature of the analyses of focus group interviews should be determined by the research questions and the purposes for which data is collected." The first step in analysis is transcribing the interview.

The interview was transcribed verbatim from the tape-recorded session. Expressions, incomplete sentences, silences were recorded meticulously. Since the aim of the interview was to learn how respondent's think, feel and talk about a particular situation or issue, the editing of the script was kept to a minimal. Once the researcher was satisfied that the transcription was complete, a decision had to be made regarding the analysis of the data. In the analysis of the data, the researcher wished to ensure that the true lived experience was captured and that all of the issues raised were reflected in the analysis.

With respect to the method of analysis, the researcher chose content analysis rather than grounded theory since grounded theory was not seen to serve the purpose of the current research since its philosophical roots, theoretical underpinnings and empirical implementation are not consistent with the nature and goals of the study. In terms of content analysis, the researcher could choose from one of two techniques. Shamdasani (1999: 104) identifies the cut-and-paste technique and the content analysis technique. In the cut and paste technique, phrases, sentences or words are coded from the transcript and cut apart. These codes are grouped together on the basis of similarity from which common, major themes or categories are identified as they emerge from the transcript.

The common theme or category could also be identified prior to the processing of coding. For the purpose of the current study, the analysis of the feedback received from the focus group interview was based on the technique of content analysis, instead of the cut-and-paste technique. The technique will be discussed in greater detail in the discussion that follows.

According to Shamdasani (1999: 108), the method of content analysis, the content of focus group discussions must first be converted into specific units of information that can be analysed by the researcher. This conversion or coding of data precedes the analysis of the content and is referred to as the data-making process. The steps in the structuring process, which are common to all applications, include unitising, sampling and recording. Each of the steps, as they were applied, will be discussed in detail in the following discussion.

First, the unit of analysis must be selected. Unitising involves the appropriate unit or level of analysis, which in the current study are phrases, sentences, complete sentences and dialogues.

Second, from the unit of analysis, the following three kinds of units were considered: sampling units, recording units and context units.

a. Sampling units are parts of the larger whole – that is, they are part of the entire content of the focus group discussion. Sampling units can be regarded as independent of each other and have well defined physical boundaries. These include individual words, complete sentences or the totality of exchange among two or more respondents. Sampling units represent the way in which the broad structure of the information within the discussion is divided. Sampling units provide a way of organizing information that is related. The sampling unit approach was used to identify the recurring themes by grouping common expressions, words, phrases and sentences that were elicited in response to each of the questions.

b. Recording units are subsets of sampling units, which record a set of words and its accompanying meanings. Recording units make up a sampling unit that consists of all of the interaction concerned. This kind of recording provides for a basis for the descriptive analysis of the interactions and issues discussed. For example, in the current study, once the broad themes were identified from the sampling unit, individual words, phrases, expressions, metaphors, were placed within the categories defined in order to give more effect to the description.

c. Context units represent the environments or contexts in which the statements occur. Within the broader sampling units the recording units represent specific statements and the context unit represent the environments or contexts in which the statements occur. Context units provide a basis for interpreting a recording unit since it provides a referent for the content of the recording unit. Context in the current study is the actual discussion that ensued under the researcher's guidance.

For example, question one of the focus group discussion required mentors to provide a discussion in response to the question: How would you describe the needs of first-year students? In response to this question, the following words, phrases, expressions, sentences were identified from the transcript and noted. These include *"students don't know what direction to take", "students don't know what is always good for them", "students don't understand what the university requires of them", "mentees cannot deal with peer pressure", "the environment of the university is overwhelming", "so overwhelming that they can drown if not steered in the right direction."* Other statements include *"students don't know how to study", "the lecturers don't make life easier for students", "mentees are unable to understand because there are such big differences in language", "some subjects are so hard that we don't understand a thing" , "we don't even know why we fail" , "university is not only about passing tests and exams"* and *"when my child comes to university he will know the true purpose of higher education."* And yet other common phrases include: *"students don't know how to make use of campus resources", "students should be smart and make use of all that is available",*

"challenges will always be there so deal with environmental influences as positively as possible."

On the basis of the above samples, the following three broad categories were identified:

a. The need to be steered in the right direction;

b. The need to have access to the content and canon of academia; and

c. Assistance in integrating the impact of various environmental influences on first year students.

Against the above categories, similar words, phrases, sentences and expressions were recorded. The frequency with which particular phrases, sentences and expressions occur lent weight and support to the identification of the themes.

According to Shamdasani (1999: 109), it is not often practical to unitise all of the discussion that arises in a focus group. Complete unitization becomes even more difficult when multiple focus groups are used. For this reason, most focus groups involve some sampling of the total group discussion discussion. The analyst may seek to identify important themes and sample statements within themes. This was carried out in the current study.

Third, the recording of the data is the final stage of data making. The recording must be based on the execution of an explicit set of recording instructions. In other words, how will units be assigned to specific categories. The following rules applied:

a. The nature of the raw data from which the recording is to be done which, in the current study is the transcript.

b. The characteristics of the recorder who in the current study is the researcher who has been involved in the mentoring programme and familiar with the research method.

c. The training that the coder will need which in the current case is not considered as essential.

d. The specific rules for placing units into categories, which in the current study has been based on referential units and thematic units.

Fourth, after the process of data making the data is analysed. The point of departure for the analysis of data has been the referential unit and the thematic unit. The referential unit (Shamdasani, 1999: 110) is defined in terms of a referent, which in the current study might be an expression, word, phrase or sentence that refers to or describes the process of mentoring. The thematic unit includes a more global interpretative or explanatory statement, recurring systems of beliefs or explanations about mentoring.

Fifth, in order to give effect to both the referential and thematic unit, the following forms of content analysis were utilised:

a. Pragmatic content analysis, which required the identification of codes, allocation of these codes to emerging categories with the attendant explanations of why mentors said what they said. This was easily discernible from the transcript since much of the interview was guided by the questions of why.

b. Semantic content analysis, which seeks to classify signs according to their meanings. This type of analysis may take three forms: designation analysis, attribution analysis and assertions analysis. For the purpose of this study, attribution analysis was used. Attribution analysis required determining the frequency with which certain words, especially adjectives, verbs, adverbs, metaphors, analogies were used. This form of analysis was especially useful

since mentors are generally very descriptive in what they have to say. Where the mother tongue was used, words were translated into English. However, this was not a common occurrence.

Of concern to this analysis is the issue of the validity and reliability of the results. Since the focus group discussion has been recorded verbatim and the unit of analysis identified on the basis of this verbatim transcript the only point of contention might be the researcher's interpretation. However, the researcher is of the view that since she was guided by the focus group discussion and categories and themes selected from the verbatim transcript there must be very little cause for questioning the reliability of the findings. With regard to the validity of the findings, a comparison of these findings with the findings obtained from mentees (the questionnaire) will serve to shed light on the validity of the findings. The comparison of feedback received from mentees, mentors and faculty co-ordinators will be discussed in 4.5.

3.5.12 Writing the Research Report

This is the final stage of the research process and "... represents the reconstruction of the research process" (Mouton, 1996: 170). It is presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Five is the concluding chapter, presenting a synthesis, making interpretations and offering recommendations.

3.6 SUMMARY

This chapter explains the research design and outlines the various steps undertaken in the current study. The hypothesis aims to test the impact of the student mentorship programme on academic, personal and social development, thereby establishing the extent of the need for such a programme at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. In order to test the hypothesis, the researcher proceeded with a literature review, supplemented by the views of mentees, mentors and faculty co-ordinators. The steps in the research process were meticulously carried out. These steps

include formulating the research problem, designing the research, conceptualising key concepts and the hypothesis, operationalising, sampling, collecting data, analysing data and finally writing the research report. Strengths and limitations of the study were also highlighted. The main forms of data collection were participant observation, the administration of questionnaires and the conducting of focus group interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review on the experience of students in higher education clearly indicates the complexities and challenges that both students and institutions are facing in coming to terms with the demands of higher education. The tendency for academia and institutional leaders has been to understand and interpret student experience and design the academic-social environment, without much attention being paid to how students live the experience of higher education. The current study makes a bold attempt to highlight and bring into the open the significance of understanding the experience of students from their own perspectives. It has forced a recognition and acknowledgement of the need for a wider and deeper analysis of multiple institutional influences on student participation and performance in higher education, and created an opportunity for a better understanding of students' cultural expressions, their histories, identities and behaviour. An assumption has been made that the experience of first year students in higher education has been one of alienation and disengagement leading to a range of negative outcomes, and that peer facilitated mentoring has the potential to adequately address some of these challenges. In order to test this assumption, data was gathered by administering an interview schedule to mentees and conducting focus group interviews with mentors. Since planning and organisation of the programme determine the success of its implementation, interview schedules were administered to faculty co-ordinators, the middle layer of managers. The aim was to ascertain the degree of efficiency of the planning, organisation and implementation of the programme.

The process of data analysis and interpretation begins with data collection. One hundred and thirty four (134) questionnaires were administered and one hundred and one (101) questionnaires were received. This constitutes a seventy five percent (75%) return rate, and is therefore acceptable. Focus group interviews were held with 15 mentors in four separate groups. Questionnaires were administered to four faculty co-ordinators (the total number) and only two were returned. This chapter provides an analysis, interpretation and synthesis of the responses that were obtained during the data gathering process. The method of data processing "...involves at least two kinds of operations, namely data reduction (during which the qualitative and quantitative data are summarised) and data analysis. Data analysis would comprise both qualitative analysis, which includes processes such as thematical and content analysis, and quantitative or statistical analysis. Data processing is followed by synthesis, which involves 'interpretation' or ' explanation' of the data (Mouton, 1996: 67). Both statistical analysis and thematic/content analysis are used in the analysis. In the analysis F represents frequency, while % represents percentage. The responses received in the focus group interviews were transcribed; recurring themes were identified from the transcript, and an interpretation was made within the framework of content analysis.

Data was entered onto the Microsoft Excel programme and the results were computed. Measures of statistical analysis include a chi-square test revealed that there was no significant difference between the independent variables and the impact of peer facilitated mentoring at the 95% level of significance. The findings are presented in the form of tables combined with interpretations and comments. The data in the mentee questionnaire are presented in the form of frequency distributions and percentages.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF THE MENTEE QUESTIONNAIRE

The mentee questionnaire consists of Sections A to C. Section A identifies the respondent's age, race, gender, nationality, type of physical challenge, type of faculty, an assessment of previous educational experience, linguistic background, family background, joint family income, parents' occupations and parents' levels of education.

Section B includes questions that aim to understand the first year student's experience of alienation in higher education. Section C aims to understand the influence of the mentorship programme on the student, at the level of academic, personal and social mentoring.

4.2.1 Analysis of Section A - Independent Variables

These questions include the student's academic and personal background such as age, race, gender, nationality, type of physical challenge, type of faculty, an assessment of previous educational experience, linguistic background, family background, joint family income, parents' occupations and parents' levels of education.

4.2.1.1 How old are you?

In the context of the current study, the age distribution of students becomes significant, since it provides a profile of the cohort of first year students and assists in subsequent interpretations of student participation, preparedness and maturity. The results are presented in Table 4.1.

TABLE 4.1

AGE DISTRIBUTION

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
17 years – 19 years	83	82%
20 years – 22 years	13	13%
23 years – 25 years	1	1%
26 years – 28 years	1	1%
29 years – 31 years	2	2%
32+	1	1%
TOTAL	**101**	**100%**

The majority of students (82%) are between 17 years and 19 years of age. The next highest age group is between 20 years and 22 years. These figures are consistent with the age profile of the current student enrolment of first year students in higher education. These figures indicate that first year students enter the higher education system straight from school and may require considerable assistance in their psychosocial adjustment as

they proceed from school to university. This figure also indicates that a larger number of younger students may require mentoring, as compared to the older student.

4.2.1.2 Indicate your race, nationality and gender.

The Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN) has a diverse student population. The variable of race is significant since it reflects the extent to which the policy of increasing access has been realised and the extent to which various racial groupings are represented in the mentorship programme.

The university has also made attempts to increase the number of foreign students, especially those from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, since a goal of the mentorship programme is to address the developmental needs of foreign and international students.

In keeping with the national policy of increasing the number of women students participating in higher education, attempts have been made to encourage the admission of women to the university. The variables of race and gender are significant since they influence student campus experience. Scisney-Matlock et al (2001:83) concur with this view. Based on a study on the impact of mentoring on undergraduate students in preparation for life in an increasingly diverse society, they conclude that often, but not always, student campus experience is influenced by factors such as race, ethnicity and gender. The response to this question reflects the extent to which this goal has been realised. The results are presented in Table 4.2.

TABLE 4.2

NATIONALITY-RACE-GENDER DISTRIBUTION

NATIONALITY				RACE								GENDER			
South African		Other (Specify)		African		Indian		Coloured		White		Male		Female	
F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
95	95%	5	5%	65	64%	32	32%	2	2%	2	2%	40	40%	61	60%

The majority of students (95%) participating in the study are of South African nationality. Five percent (5%) are foreign and/or international students. In terms of racial background, 65% belong to the African population group, followed by 32% Indian students and two percent (2%) for both Coloured and White students. These figures are also in proportion with the general student enrolment at the university. Since 65% of the students participating in the mentorship programme are African and 32% Indian, it would seem that the mentorship programme attends to the needs of under-prepared and disadvantaged students.

4.2.1.3 Indicate the type of physical challenge.

In keeping with the university policy of increasing access to previously marginalised students, attempts are made to encourage the enrolment of physically challenged students. A goal of the mentorship programme is to address the needs of these students. Table 4.3 indicates the number of physically challenged students participating in the student mentorship programme.

TABLE 4.3

TYPE OF PHYSICAL CHALLENGE

TYPE OF PHYSICAL CHALLENGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Blind	2	2%
Deaf	1	1%
Physically challenged	1	1%
Other	-	-
Non-physically challenged students	97	96%
TOTAL	**101**	**100%**

While a small figure of 4 out of 101 mentees may seem insignificant, the results indicate that physically challenged students do participate in the mentorship programme, and that peer mentoring can serve those who have a physical challenge.

4.2.1.4 Indicate your faculty.

The mentoring programme is meant to serve students across all faculties. Its academic, social and personal goals incorporate elements specific to each faculty. These elements relate mainly to the different ways of accessing different kinds of academic material, ranging from the sciences to the humanities. The participation rate of students from different faculties will shed some light on the extent of student involvement in the programme, the results of which are presented in Table 4.4.

TABLE 4.4

TYPE OF FACULTY

TYPE OF FACULTY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Faculty of Humanities	18	18%
Faculty of Law	12	12%
Faculty of Commerce and Management	26	26%
Faculty of Science	18	18%
Faculty of Engineering	12	12%
Faculty of Health Sciences	15	14%
TOTAL	**101**	**100%**

There seems to be an equal spread of mentees across all faculties with the largest concentration being in the Faculty of Commerce and Management (26%) and the smallest concentration in the Faculties of Law and Engineering (12%). The rationale behind this question was to ascertain the levels of participation of students from the different faculties. It is not the goal of the current study to provide a comparative account of the patterns and trends of participation from different faculties.

4.2.1.5 How would you describe your secondary schooling experience as preparation for higher education?

The significance of this question lies in its ability to highlight the nature of students' secondary schooling experience and its role in preparing students for higher education. Clearly, higher education can only be as successful as the qualities of the secondary

schooling allow it to be. The responses, as presented in Table 4.5, will also give some indication as to the need for student support systems at university.

TABLE 4.5

QUALITY OF STUDENTS' SECONDARY SCHOOLING AS PREPARATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
5-Excellent	32	32%
4-Good	46	46%
3-Average	21	20%
2-Poor	1	1%
1-Very Poor	1	1%
TOTAL	**101**	**100%**

The majority of students describe their secondary schooling experience as either being Good (46%) or Excellent (32%). Only 2% felt that their secondary schooling experience was below average. These views are inconsistent with the literature study, which systematically stresses that mentoring supposedly serves the academically under-prepared student (La Rose, 1995). Further, the higher education system in South Africa has a large intake (at least 60%) of educationally under-prepared students.

4.2.1.6 Is this your first enrolment at an institution of higher learning?

The literature indicates that there is a large intake of first-time entering students in the higher education system and that such students have many hurdles to cross (Gardner, 2000). This question aims to assess the number of first-time entering students. The results are presented in Table 4.6.

TABLE 4.6

FIRST ENROLMENT AT AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER LEARNING

OPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	94	93%
No	7	7%
Unsure	-	-
TOTAL	**101**	**100%**

For at least 97% of mentees, this is their first experience of the higher education system. This figure, combined with the dominant age group that students belong to, indicates that first year students at university are younger and less experienced. Vulnerability to external forces and peer pressure is common among students in this age group. Attempts at reining first year students into the system and ensuring that they remain part of the institution until the completion of their studies as argued for by Astin (1975), Boyer (1987) and Gardner (2000) might be greatly needed.

4.2.1.7 Indicate your first language and second language.

While the medium of instruction at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal is English, this is not necessarily the language of mentoring as well. Mentors and mentees are free to communicate in the language they are most comfortable in. The purpose of this question is to ascertain mentees' first and second language. The results are reported in Table 4.7.

TABLE 4.7

STUDENT(S)' FIRST LANGUAGE AND SECOND LANGUAGE

LANGUAGE	FIRST LANGUAGE		SECOND LANGUAGE	
	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
English	33	33%	51	63%
Afrikaans	-	-	20	25%
Zulu (Isizulu)	57	57%	2	2%
Xhosa (Isixhosa)	3	2%	1	1%
Swazi (Isiswazi)	-	-	-	-
Southern Sotho (Sesotho)	2	2%	2	2%
Northern Sotho (Sipedi)	1	1%	-	-
Tswana (Setswana)	2	2%	-	-
Tsonga (Shitsonga)	-	-	-	-
Ndebele	-	-	-	-
Venda	1	1%	-	-
Other	2	2%	5	7%
TOTAL	**101**	**100%**	**81**	**100%**

The first language for most students (57%) is IsiZulu, followed by English (33%). The second language for most students (63%) is English followed by Afrikaans (25%). Fifty seven percent is a substantial figure, and clearly indicates that the language of instruction (English) is not necessarily the language that students are conversant in. The implication of these results for the successful engagement between students and the broader university community suggests that there is a need for a more extensive analysis of the relationship between the multiple sub-environments of the institution and the student. These sub-environments exist at the level where linguistic access to the content of disciplines, curriculum design, cognitive interpretation and student cultural values play themselves out within the context of complex social relationships. These figures are also consistent with the demographic profile of the region.

4.2.1.8 Are you the first person in your family to attend university?

This question aims to identify the number of first generation students. The question is useful, since the literature points to the fact that a number of challenges faced by students emerge as a result of being the first in the family to attend university. The results are presented in Table 4.8.

TABLE 4.8

NUMBER OF FIRST GENERATION STUDENTS

OPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	55	55%
No	46	45%
Unsure	-	-
TOTAL	**101**	**100%**

A large number of students (55%) have indicated that they are the first in their family to enter university. This figure is consistent with the literature study that indicates that the majority of students entering the higher education system in developing countries are first generation students. Most of these students also come from the lower social-class backgrounds as supported by (Connor, 2001) thereby perpetuating compounding the problem of academic under-preparedness.

4.2.1.9 Indicate your joint average annual family income.

Economic background is a contributory factor to student success in education. The literature study illustrates a clear link between a student's socio-economic background and the possibilities for success in higher education. This question aims to examine a student's economic background by looking at the extent to which students are concentrated in the lower, upper and middle-income strata. This question also sheds light on the degree to which the university has been able to realise its goal of increasing access to those students who come from working class backgrounds, and by implication those who have been marginalised. The results are presented in Table 4.9.

TABLE 4.9

JOINT AVERAGE ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME.

JOINT AVERAGE ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
None	6	6%
R0 – R9 999	37	37%
R10 000 – R19 999	11	10%
R20 000 – R29 999	6	6%
R30 000 – R39 999	-	-
R40 000 – R49 999	6	6%
R50 000 – R59 999	2	2%
R60 000 – R69 999	3	3%
R70 000 – R79 999	4	4%
R80 000 – R89 999	9	9%
R90 000 – R99 999	3	3%
R100 000 – R109 999	3	3%
R110 000 –R119 999	5	5%
R120 000 – R129 999	-	-
R130 000 – R139 999	1	1%
R140 000 – R149 999	1	1%
R150 000 – R159 999	-	-
R160 000+	4	4%
TOTAL	**101**	**100%**

In terms of the Census in Brief Report issued in July 1999 by Statistics South Africa for 1996, figures for the employed population group aged 15-65 years have been provided. In terms of the figures, 16% of the population earn above R42 000-00 a year. Twenty two percent earn between R18 000 - 00 and R42 000 – 00 a year. Seventeen percent earn between R12 000 and R18 000 a year. Nineteen percent earn between R6 000-00 and R12 000-00 a year. Sixteen percent earn between R0 and R6 000-00 a year. In terms of these figures, at least 50% of the population earn less than R18 000-00 a year. The distribution of income according to race and gender is as follows:

- 65% of white men earn above R3 501-00 and 4% earn less than R500-00;
- 30% of Indian men above R3 501-00 and 5% earn less than R500-00;
- 12% of Coloured men earn above R3 501-00 and 19% earn less than R500-00; and
- 6% of African men earn above R3 501-00 and 26% earn less than R500-00.

The figures for women indicate that:

- 35% of white women earn above R3 501-00 and 8% earn less than R500-00;

- 17% of Indian women above R3 501-00 and 9% earn less than R500-00;
- 7% of Coloured women earn above R3 501-00 and 30% earn less than R500-00; and
- 5% of African women earn above R3 501-00 and 48% earn less than R500-00.

These figures must be read in conjunction with the figures in Table 4.2, which depicts the concentration of students from the various racial groups. Table 4.2 indicates that 64% of students are African, 32% are Indian, 2% are Coloured and 2% are White. Since 64% are African students and 2% are white students and since the census figures indicate that White men and women earn more than African men and women, it can be cautiously inferred that the greater number of students participating in the programme are from the lower income groups.

In terms of Table 4.9, the highest concentration of students falls in the R 0 to the R9 999 income strata (37%). Combined with the next highest figure of 10% in the R10 000 to R19 000 income strata, indications are that a large percentage of students come from families whose joint average annual income is less than R19 000-00. This figure is consistent with those provided in the Census Report indicating that a large number of students are drawn from lower income households.

4.2.1.10 **Indicate your parent(s)' or guardian(s)' type of employment in terms of whether they are professionals, vocational workers or unskilled workers. If you do not have parents or guardians, please write none in the appropriate block.**

***Professional refers to employment in a profession such as doctor, nurse, teacher, principal, attorney, lecturer or an associated form of employment.**

***Vocational refers to employment in an occupation such as builder, carpenter, artisan, painter, plumber or an associated form of employment.**

***Unskilled refers to the employment in an occupation that requires lower level skills and a lower level of education.**

Socio-economic background is a determinant to both economic and educational success among students. Students whose parents or guardians are professionals are more likely to be better prepared when they arrive at university, than those whose parents are not professional. Furthermore, students whose parents or guardians are unskilled are less likely to have had the kind of experiences that support and enhance their experience of higher education. Such students are also more likely to experience problems related to funding, accommodation, tuition and access to significant people who could make their lives much easier. Connor (2001:204) provides support for the view that socio-economic status influences higher education success. He claims that while participation in the higher education has increased there has been a reduction in the participation between social class groups resulting in lower average achievement and retention of young people from lower social-class backgrounds. The results are presented in Table 4.10.

TABLE 4. 10

PARENT (S)' GUARDIAN (S)' TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT

OCCUPATION	MOTHER		FATHER	
	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
None	15	15%	12	16%
Professional	21	22%	24	34%
Vocational	19	20%	16	23%
Unskilled	42	43%	19	27%
TOTAL	**97**	**100%**	**71**	**100%**

The figures indicate that a larger number of women (43%) are unskilled, as compared to 27% for men. Furthermore, a large number of men are employed in professional occupations (34%), as compared to 22% for women. The figures thus suggest that fewer women are professional and fewer men are unskilled. The figures for vocational occupation are almost equal for both men (32%) and women (29%). A point of interest is that the total number of women (97) exceeded the total number of men (71) by 26. These

figures suggest that women head most households and indications are that these households do not have a male parent. Many women can therefore be said to be single breadwinners in their families. The challenges confronting women to care for their families must be enormous, given that they are concentrated in the vocational and unskilled groups. In the light of the lack of high-level skills, the responsibility of educating their offspring in a manner that would allow them an easy and comfortable access and experience in the broader education system, appears to be challenging.

4.2.1.11 Indicate your parent(s)' guardian(s)' level of education. If you do not have parents or guardians, please write none in the appropriate block.

In the same way that students with more professional parents or guardians are more likely to be better prepared when they arrive university, those whose parents or guardians have a higher level of education are more likely to enter university with a wider range of knowledge and skills. They are more likely to have a positive attitude towards higher learning and likely to remain in the higher education system for a longer period of time. However, this question also aims to identify the number of students who come from academically under-prepared backgrounds, not only in terms of schooling and socio-economic background, but also in terms of prior educational and social experience. Academic under-preparedness is referred to as educational backgrounds that have not prepared students for the rigour of higher education. This question deepens an understanding of the notion of marginalisation and disadvantagement. The results are presented in Table 4.11.

TABLE 4.11

PARENT (S)' AND OR GUARDIAN (S)' LEVEL OF EDUCATION

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	MOTHER/GUARDIAN		FATHER/GUARDIAN	
	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
None	15	16%	12	17%
Up to Standard 3	6	6%	9	13%
Up to Standard 6	6	6%	4	6%
Up to Standard 8	12	12%	6	8%
Up to matric	28	30%	14	20%
A diploma	12	12%	9	13%
A degree	12	12%	9	13%
A post-graduate qualification	6	6%	8	10%
TOTAL	**97**	**100%**	**71**	**100%**

A larger number of men (10%) hold a post-graduate qualification, compared to women (6%). However, the figures for the other levels of education for both male and female remain constant. On the whole, the level of education of parents and/or guardians is fairly low. Only 21% of combined parents and/or guardians hold a degree and/or a post-graduate qualification. Forty two percent (42%) of combined parents and/or guardians hold a qualification between none to Standard 8. It can be concluded that the majority of students included in this sample do not necessarily enjoy the benefits and experiences that accrue under the guidance of well educated, informed and professional parents. As indicated in the literature study, a large proportion of students entering the higher education system are first-generation and first time entering students. Yet, these students have accessed the higher education system. Despite the shortcomings and gaps in their individual histories, family, cultural and educational experiences, they are required to make the most of the opportunities afforded to them. Given that these students have not had the advantage of sharing and learning from the educational and professional experience of their parents, the institution should make attempts to fill in these gaps. Such attempts should aim to provide students with explanations, discussions and debates around the role of education, and specifically tat of higher education. These discussions should be informal, non-threatening and discursive and reach out to the hearts and minds of students in a manner that an informed and professional parent would.

TABLE 4.12

CORRECT CHOICE IN THE SELECTION OF A DEGREE

OPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	49	49%
No	26	26%
Unsure	26	25%
TOTAL	**101**	**100%**

A substantial number of students (49%) stated that they have made the correct choice in their selection of a degree. At the same time the 26% of mentees stating that they have made an incorrect choice in their selection of a degree, cannot be ignored. Since 26% of students have indicated that they have not made a correct choice and 25% of students indicated that they are unsure as to their selection of a degree, it can be concluded that the area of career development requires greater attention than currently given and should occupy a central role at the point when students enter the higher education system. Career development must also continue for as long as the need remains.

Motivate your response:

In motivating their response, students have provided the following statements. All statements provided by students have been included in Tables 4.13 to 4.15. These responses are grouped into positive, negative and neutral categories and stated verbatim. The reason for this form of analysis is that verbatim responses, rather than an aggregated response, provide a more accurate and in-depth account of students' views. The results are presented in Appendix D1, Tables 4.13, Table 4.14 and Table 4.15.

Interpretation of results

The positive responses far outweigh the negative responses. While more students feel that they have chosen an appropriate degree and one in which they feel comfortable, the level of uncertainty indicates that the area of selection of a degree vis-à-vis career guidance is essential. The number of positive responses also indicates a level of maturity among students. This level of maturity manifests itself in their understanding of the concept of a degree and its links with the prospects of a future career.

4.2.2.2 Do you feel that the degree you enrolled for will prepare you for a career?

The choice of a degree as preparation for a career is crucial and critical for almost every student. The constant worry of finding employment after a qualification has been obtained, pre-occupies most students. In this regard, as already stated in 4.2.2.1, adequate career guidance and career counselling prior to entering the university are essential. This question aims to ascertain the views of students regarding the programme they have enrolled for in preparation of a career. To some degree, the responses also reflect student confidence in the choices made. The results are presented in Table 4.16.

TABLE 4.16

ENROLMENT IN DEGREE AS PREPARATION FOR A CAREER

OPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	50	50%
No	24	22%
Unsure	29	28%
TOTAL	**101**	**100%**

Similar to the responses obtained in Question 4.2.2.1, 50% of students are of the opinion that their degree will prepare them for a career. Twenty two percent (22%) do not agree, and 28% are unsure. At least 50% have not said 'yes', which could indicate that a large proportion of students (50%) are not really convinced that their current choice of a degree will prepare them for a career. In motivating their response, students have provided the following statements, presented in Appendix D2 Table 4.17 and Table 4.18. These responses are grouped into positive, negative and neutral categories and stated verbatim. The reason for this form of analysis is that verbatim responses, rather than an aggregated response, provide a more accurate and in-depth account of students' views.

Interpretation of results

Both the positive and negative responses indicate that these students have a fairly good understanding of what they hoped to achieve out of the degree, what they are already achieving, and what needs to be done in order to complete their academic experience. There is also an indication of a positive academic attitude, which must bode well for both students and the institution. What appears to come through the responses, is the need for greater clarity and understanding between the world of work and the world of academia. In this regard, disciplines, as sites of knowledge dissemination, must be able to demonstrate the relevance between what is taught and learnt and the world of work. This confirms Gardner's (1986, 2000) view, which emphasises the critical role of academic advising and early career planning in preparation students for the world of work.

4.2.2.3 Do you feel that the school prepared you well for a choice of career before you enrolled at the university?

Higher education can only be as successful as the schooling system allows it to be. A student's choice of a career begins long before the student embarks on a journey into higher education. Most students come ill prepared for the demands of higher education. The situation is further exacerbated if students are still grappling with a career choice once they have enrolled at the university. The careful planning for a career and its pathing, with much assistance and guidance from their schools, should ideally be visualised long before the student enters university. In this regard, adequate career guidance and career counselling, prior to entry to the university is essential. The results are presented in Table 4.19.

TABLE 4.19

THE ROLE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLING AS PREPARATION FOR A CAREER

OPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	56	56%
No	24	24%
Unsure	21	20%
TOTAL	**101**	**100%**

While a large number (56%) have stated yes, a substantial portion (24%) have stated that their schooling system has not prepared them for a career and at least 20% are unsure. Institutional leaders and policy makers must seriously consider the disjuncture between prior schooling experience and preparation for a career. The responsibility for early career planning rests with pre-tertiary institutions of learning. However, at the point at which the student enters an institution of higher learning, systems and processes should already be in place in order to ensure that students are given the full benefit of the career choices at their disposal. Students' aptitude, strengths and weaknesses must be assessed against their selection of courses and they should be placed into appropriate programmes.

In motivating their response, students have provided their views, as presented in Appendix D3 Table 4.20 and Table 4.21. These responses are grouped into positive, negative and neutral categories and stated verbatim. The reason for this form of analysis is that verbatim responses, as opposed to aggregated response, provide a more accurate and in-depth account of students' views.

Interpretation of results

It would appear that prior career counselling is essential at the level of secondary schooling. The positive responses indicate that those students who had solid preparation at secondary school with regard to career counselling, career guidance workshops, and those who had exposure to skilled teachers who assisted students in making appropriate choices, were better prepared for the demands of their chosen degrees. The key focus

areas of career counselling prior to enrolling at an institution of higher learning seem to be the following:

a. The need for schools to provide a clear and unambiguous explanation of the challenges of a particular degree and the respective profession(s) it could lead to.
b. The need for schools to provide services related to testing students' aptitude and receptivity towards particular courses and professions.
c. The need for schools to establish communication and contact with professionals over a sustained period of time, prior to enrolment, as preparation for the demands of higher education and the subsequent profession students may enter.
d. The need for more congruency and synergy between the secondary schools and higher education in relation to disseminating information on possible career choices.

4.2.2.4 Describe what you felt in the first few weeks at the university. Be as descriptive as possible.

In the answers to this question, personal accounts of students' early experiences at university are presented in a descriptive and narrative way. This question is qualitative. Students are therefore free to express themselves as they please, thereby exposing the full breadth and depth of their experience and thus allowing the researcher to capture essential elements possibly overlooked in the study.

Response from students

In motivating their response, students have provided the following statements, as presented in Appendix D4 Table 4.22 and Table 4.23. These responses are grouped into positive and negative categories and stated verbatim. The reason for this form of analysis is that verbatim responses, rather than an aggregated response, provide a more accurate and in-depth account of students' views.

Interpretation of results

The transition from school to university is clearly a difficult one. The level of alienation manifests itself most strongly during the first few weeks on campus. The first few weeks are also crucial in determining whether or not students remain within the system as emphasised by Gardner (2000), Pascarella & Terenzini (1991) and Tinto (1993). The positive role played by peer facilitated mentoring in the early alleviation of experiences of alienation is clearly visible – as indicated by students' responses such as *"I didn't feel the way I expected to feel, lost and isolated, but the mentors helped us every step of the way".* Any period of transformation, change and adjustment is by its very nature bound to be difficult. Therefore it is in the natural order of events that students would experience this level of anxiety and distress at university.

Due recognition must be given to negative responses such as *"Difficult to listen to lectures and take down notes at the same time. Thinking of suicide", "To tell you the truth, I was scared", "I did not like the first few weeks. It was a culture shock.", I felt afraid when I saw a big crowd. I felt like going back home."* and *"I almost felt like packing my bags and going home, but couldn't."* The statements find resonance in the theoretical constructs on alienation as espoused by Mann (2001). They confirm the student positioned as an object in relation to the environment, it emphasises the cultural distance between the student and the institution and affirms the view of the student as an outsider.

The researcher is of the opinion that the following questions need to be asked in relation to interaction between students and the institution:

a. Is the institution imposing undue, irrational and uncalled for demands on the student, or are students simply not ready to meet the expectations of higher education?

b. In the rhetoric on access and equity, have stakeholders really begun to engage with the fundamental and deeper issues relating to the process of ensuring that fair access takes place? When students say that: *"...Like I was in the middle of the world (the real world) with a few guidelines along the way (my mentor)",* the

question one needs to ask regarding access is: Access to what? Is it accessing the physical buildings, access to financial resources and/or access to the core knowledge of disciplines?

c. What measures can be put in place to facilitate a disciplined transition, ensuring that the goals of success and retention in higher education are met?

d. In relation to point c above, the role played by peer facilitated mentoring in facilitating the period of transition calls for serious consideration.

4.2.2.5 If you assess your personal, social and academic experience at the university, how would you rate the following items on a scale from 1 to 5?

5 - Fully agree
4 - Agree
3 - Average
2 - Disagree
1 - Fully disagree

Student experience in higher education can be divided into three broad categories: personal, social and academic. The division of holistic student experience into the three categories is designed to facilitate analysis. It must be emphasised that all three levels are to a certain extent interrelated in determining whether students are engaging with the broader and finer aspects of the institution successfully. Therefore, the aim of this question is to assess the degree of alienation experienced by students on all three levels as they have been outlined. This question also precedes the question on the impact of peer facilitated mentoring on student development, thereby allowing the researcher to make judgements on the impact of peer facilitated mentoring on student development in a comparative and holistic manner. The results are presented in Table 4.24.

TABLE 4.24

ASSESSMENT OF PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE AT UNIVERSITY

ITEM	5	4	3	2	1
A university is about learning practical skills.	23%	32%	35%	8%	2%
A university is about searching for truth.	27%	36%	26%	7%	4%
The focus of lectures and tutorials is on developing observable skills.	30%	41%	19%	9%	1%
The focus of lectures and tutorials is on ensuring a meaningful engagement with the content of the discipline.	34%	37%	24%	3%	2%
The university treats students as customers.	12%	16%	39%	26%	7%
There is much about the higher education system that is hidden (not brought to a student's awareness).	19%	29%	33%	11%	8%
The language of the institution prevents students from meaningfully engaging with significant aspects of the institution.	4%	13%	31%	30%	22%
The academic culture of the institution prevents students from meaningfully engaging with significant aspects of the institution.	12%	12%	25%	34%	17%
Students are taken seriously on campus.	21%	28%	40%	7%	4%
Significant people (lecturers, administrators) take the views of students seriously.	16%	33%	35%	12%	4%
Students own the teaching and learning process.	10%	19%	37%	25%	9%
The university is a place of chaos and disorder.	6%	6%	20%	39%	29%
Students are forced to learn in a language that they do not like.	1%	4%	16%	33%	46%
Students are able to express themselves creatively.	17%	39%	32%	8%	4%
The university has too much power over students.	11%	10%	39%	29%	11%
Most times I feel powerless.	10%	12%	40%	27%	11%
Students are able to understand why they perform poorly in a test.	10%	31%	28%	24%	7%
I believe tests and exams at university are intended to fail me.	3%	5%	14%	42%	36%
Students are able to interact with various aspects of the university so they keep to themselves.	5%	19%	39%	30%	7%
Students are much safer if they keep to themselves.	11%	15%	27%	25%	22%

Interpretation of results

The researcher did not expect this level of engagement between students and the various facets of the institution. When these responses are compared to some of the negative responses received in 4.2.2.4, it is evident that the concept of alienation is difficult to measure in quantitative terms and that such quantitative outcomes need to be supported by qualitative feedback. In terms of the responses in Table 4.24, students show a degree of alienation in relation to knowledge about the university and ownership of the learning process. At least 50% of mentees agreed that much about the higher education system is

not brought to their awareness and only 29% of mentees agreed that students own the teaching and learning process. The results find support in Mann's (2001) concept of alienation where she highlights the invasive presence of power in the manner in which institutions deliver their academic programmes. With regard to the other items, a fairly substantial percentage of responses are located in the average category indicating that student experience is, on the whole, average and that most vacillate from alienation to engagement. The researcher is also of the view that experiences of alienation must be assessed in both quantitative and qualitative terms.

4.2.3 Analysis of Section C – The Influence of the Student Mentorship Programme (SMP) on the Student

4.2.3.1 Reflect on your experience in the student mentorship programme and rate the following items on a scale from 1 to 5.

5 - Fully agree
4 - Agree
3 - Average
2 - Disagree
1 - Fully disagree

The Student Mentorship Programme goes through various stages throughout the course of the year – depending on the particular need at the particular time. Initially, the biggest needs centre around orientation and registration with its attendant requirements such as career counselling, accommodation, funding, travel and geographical orientation. This is followed by the stage of orientation, relating to personal, social and academic adjustment. In assisting mentees in their transition from school to university, mentors are required to build on students' particular personal, social and academic skills – all of which simultaneously impact on the mentees' holistic development. Mentor's skills and capacity are developed in the training sessions discussed 2.4.4.b and Figure 2.6. These broad categories have been further broken down and itemised to assess, from the

perspective of mentees, the extent to which mentors were able to realise these goals. The results are presented in Table 4.25.

TABLE 4.25

A REFLECTION ON THE EXPERIENCE OF MENTORING

ITEM	5	4	3	2	1
PRE-REGISTRATION ORIENTATION					
The orientation team assisted me in getting to know the campus.	52%	26%	9%	8%	5%
The orientation team assisted me in the registration process.	32%	24%	19%	10%	15%
The orientation team assisted me in the selection of a degree programme.	9%	12%	21%	28%	30%
The orientation team assisted me in finding accommodation.	7%	9%	24%	26%	34%
The orientation team assisted me in getting financial help.	14%	18%	14%	18%	36%
ORIENTATION					
The orientation programme was well organised.	39%	33%	20%	3%	5%
The orientation programme helped me make the adjustment from school to university.	31%	34%	17%	12%	6%
POST ORIENTATION – PERSONAL AND SOCIAL MENTORING					
I managed to get a mentor who understood my needs.	58%	28%	11%	2%	1%
My mentor assisted me in the following ways:					
*Build confidence	37%	32%	28%	2%	1%
*Improve my self-esteem	30%	32%	29%	7%	2%
*Improve my ability to communicate	35%	28%	28%	5%	4%
*Improve my ability to communicate in English	23%	22%	27%	20%	8%
*Improve my assertiveness	28%	26%	29%	15%	2%
*Ensure that I was well motivated	28%	32%	24%	10%	6%
My mentor explains how my own values differed from those of the university	3%	20%	39%	23%	15%
My mentor helped me understand the value system of the university.	25%	43%	21%	9%	2%
My mentor understood me.	46%	27%	17%	5%	5%
My mentor introduced me to significant others on campus. These include lecturers, tutors and senior officials who would be able to assist me.	29%	29%	19%	10%	13%
My mentor helped me to deal with feelings of loneliness.	25%	22%	21%	22%	10%
My mentor showed me how to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds.	12%	28%	34%	15%	11%
My mentor was a friend.	39%	33%	13%	8%	7%
My mentor was a guide.	45%	38%	11%	3%	3%
My mentor was a role model.	27%	30%	25%	7%	11%
Mentorship is about nation building.	31%	33%	25%	5%	6%
POST REGISTRATION – ACADEMIC MENTORING					
My mentor helped me understand the demands of various courses.	33%	33%	13%	6%	2%
My mentor helped me understand the importance of different subjects.	34%	39%	21%	4%	2%
My mentor provided greater understanding to the purpose of higher education.	36%	37%	18%	7%	2%
My mentor helped me understand the concepts in my discipline.	28%	31%	28%	7%	6%
My mentor explained difficult concepts in my mother tongue.	26%	19%	25%	11%	19%
Mentoring is different from lectures and tutorials.	59%	26%	7%	4%	4%
My mentor showed me different approaches to learning.	27%	30%	25%	12%	6%
My mentor was able to guide me on my weaknesses in tests and exams.	32%	32%	19%	11%	6%
My mentor helped improve my study skills.	36%	29%	16%	13%	6%

Interpretation of results

The need for personal and social mentoring seems to be the most acute during the pre-registration orientation stage and the orientation stage, which largely constitutes the period of transition from school to university. These findings find support in the study of the first year experience by Tinto (1993) and Pascarella & Terenzini (1991) who claim that academic and social integration are the bedrock, which should inform the design of the first year experience.

The qualitative feedback indicates that feelings of alienation and isolation are greatest at this stage. While mentors were useful in assisting students in getting to know the campus and in the registration process, they did not provide much help in the key areas of providing information on accommodation, funding and selecting a degree. In this regard, it is useful to draw on the insights of Bronfenbrenner's ecology model, which highlights the impact of multiple environments on students' academic development and the need for a more integrated and all-inclusive approach when dealing with student issues. The results also indicate that mentors were unable to highlight the differences in value systems between mentees and the higher education system. Possibly mentors were not aware of this objective. Nevertheless, the issue of values needs to be the starting point of initial discussions on adjustments and adaptation to the university, since a disjuncture between the two can lead to negative outcomes. Mentor attributes and behaviour are clearly significant when it comes to empowering mentees. This is illustrated by responses indicating that mentors acted as role models, friends and guides. The importance of these mentor attributes are also emphasised by Reilly (1992). Reilly (1992) identifies positive mentor attributes such as sensitivity, a willingness to devote time to mentoring, having good people skills and a willingness to identify problems and solutions. Mentees also have a need to develop their self-confidence, assertiveness, self-esteem, communication, communicating in English and motivation. These findings find supported in the research conducted by Reilly (1992). He identifies positive mentee attributes such as being talented, wanting to extend this talent, a desire to create something new and maturity. Mentors, on the other hand, need to be able to reach out to students and understand mentees' needs, feelings, wants and desires.

An overwhelming positive response on the impact of academic mentoring during the post-registration phase indicates that mentoring was successful in this area, and that there is a significant need for intense academic support. These results are supported by (La Rose, 1995) who concludes that academic and social mentoring form the key focus areas of mentoring. This form of support must incorporate all elements of the curriculum, providing mentees with full access to the same. Academic mentoring clearly plays a crucial and developmental role in student development.

In terms of the individual items assessed under academic mentoring, the figures suggest that academic mentoring had the biggest impact on the following areas:

a. understanding the demands of courses, subjects and the broader purpose of higher education;
b. conceptual understanding and linguistic proficiency;
c. facilitating communication and understanding in the mother tongue;
d. the form of the curriculum – the purpose of lectures, tutorials, tests and examinations;
e. understanding different approaches to learning; and
f. improving study skills.

Mahatey et al (1994) support the need for academic skills development. Based on a study with first year students across all disciplines, they conclude that the learning needs of first year students at UWC include the need for deep level cognitive skills, the need to undergo conceptual change in their understanding of learning, learning study skills and co-operative learning groups. They also conclude that psychosocial needs include having positive role models and a supportive environment that promotes well-being.

While the results indicate that mentees have not experienced a high degree of alienation with regard to various aspects of the university, the responses on the impact of mentoring on mentees' development indicate that mentees felt a strong need for support, guidance and encouragement. One form of mentoring cannot be separated from another, since all

three forms of mentoring simultaneously impact on the students' ability to deal with different aspects of the environment, in such a way that they are empowered to handle complex academic matters. In other words, mentors serve as a conduit between the psychosocial and academic environment of the institution on the one hand, and the current and past experiences of mentees on the other. In serving as conduits, mentors are in a position to facilitate a teaching and learning process that instils positive attributes such as motivation, discipline, self-belief, organisation and the ability to search for information and use it appropriately – all of which are essential for academic success.

4.2.3.2 Read through the definitions provided and rate the degree of importance of academic, social and personal mentoring from the most important, second most important and the third most important.

1 - Most important
2 - Second most important
3 - Third most important

a. **Academic mentoring is defined as helping the student cope with their academic workload, giving tips on more effective study methods, acting as a link between staff and students and helping students prepare for tests and examination (La Rose, 1995: 31).**

b. **Social mentoring is generally described as being a friend, acting as a guide, being a role model and being a big brother/sister (La Rose, 1995: 30).**

c. **Personal mentoring focuses on psychosocial functions that relate to the individual's values, motives and behaviour rather than on the individual's ability to perform certain tasks. Counselling and friendship are features of psychosocial mentoring (Lewis, 2001: 73).**

In your opinion, which form of mentoring is the most important, second most important and third most important to you?

As indicated in question 4.2.2.5, peer mentoring has been divided into three broad categories: personal, social and academic mentoring. While all three categories are regarded as equally important, the need for one may exceed the other. In aiming to assist students, it is essential to know which form of mentoring takes precedence over the other and why this may be the case. In measuring this item, mentees were required to indicate the degree of importance of each form of mentoring ranging from Most Important (1), Second Most Important (2) and the Third Most Important (3). The results are presented in Table 4.26.

TABLE 4.26

DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC MENTORING

FORM OF MENTORING	DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE		
	1	2	3
Academic mentoring	76%	20%	4%
Personal mentoring	12%	36%	52%
Social mentoring	12%	44%	44%
TOTAL	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

The results indicate that academic mentoring is seen as most important, followed closely and equally by both personal and social mentoring.

Motivate your response.

In motivating their response, students have provided statements presented in Appendix D5 Table 4.27. The responses have been presented verbatim, followed by an interpretation.

Interpretation of results

The qualitative response from mentees makes for a very interesting and vivid understanding of the real dynamics of peer facilitated mentoring. Several assumptions can be drawn. Yet, the following consistencies in the responses must remain as core principles of peer mentoring in higher education:

a. Personal mentoring and social mentoring are pre-requisites for academic mentoring. The overlapping and integration of all three forms of mentoring should form the centre and core around which the process of mentoring revolves.

b. The process of mentoring itself is dynamic, complex and deep. Mentoring reaches to the hearts and minds of mentees as evidenced by the mentees' responses. The process is informal and engaging – as emphasised by the constant description of the mentor as being approachable, friendly and kind, and acting as a guide. These findings support those of Reilly (1992), Jacobi (1991) and Frey & Noller (1983). Jacobi (1991) identifies issues such as emotional support, appraisal support, information support and instrumental support as critical to the mentoring relationship. Frey & Noller (1983) identify issues such as characteristics of the learner, mentor skills and knowledge, caring mentors, committed mentors and emotionally involved mentors as crticical to the mentoring relationship.

c. The process is sustained and safe. It allows mentees to draw on the past experiences (strengths, failures and weaknesses) of their mentors in a manner that is non-threatening, and one that affords them the opportunity of coming to terms with their own human weaknesses and frailties without the attendant feelings of shame and embarrassment. These results confirm Reilly's (1992) views that mentors need to be sensitive to students needs and expectations and be able to create a trusting and safe learning relationship. These views also support those of Lewis (2000: 98) in as far as it emphasises the need for a safe and trusted environment in which to try out different ways of doing things.

d. Since mentoring is informal and focuses on the individual, it affords stronger possibilities for building mentees' self-esteem, self-confidence, motivation and self-assertiveness. Mentees have indicated that part of mentoring is to assist them in defining who and what they are. For this to happen, they need to build on sound and healthy relationships within the context of collective personal, social and academic learning. Mentoring has allowed for this process to unfold. These views confirm that of Megginson & Clutterbuck (1997: 13) who coin the term "personal support" to describe the process by which a mentor accepts a mentee in

his/her own right and confirms the individual worth or value of the mentee. The cumulative effects of peer confirmation must in the end ensure that mentees are able to persist in a given task. These findings find some resonance in the research of Attinasi as cited in Renn & Arnold (2003: 280) who states that normative pressure of peer culture does not cause students to persist. Rather, "...it is the knowledge gained through peer micro-systems that enables the student to develop the ability and the self-confidence to persist." The peer mentor programme falls in the realm of a micro-system.

e. The close interaction between two human beings has clearly had an impact on the cross-fertilisation of value systems, thereby allowing mentees to make sense of their complex, sometimes different and ever-changing environments. The profound impact of this form of close interaction, as shown by mentee feedback reinforces Bronfenbrenner's (1993) axiom that development must ultimately occur on a face to face setting in which the person exists.

f. Particular strengths of academic mentoring reside in the ability to teach study skills in preparation for tests and examinations. House as cited in Jacobi (1991) would refer to this as instrumental support.

4.2.3.3 In discussions with your mentor, which language do you mostly communicate in?

It has been the researcher's observation that mentees and mentors tend to speak in the language they are most comfortable in – often this is not the language of the institution or the language of instruction. Since language plays an important role in conceptual development it must, of necessity, be one that mentees are receptive to. This question aims to identify the common language of mentoring and the reasons why students choose to communicate in one language over another. The comments provided by mentees are stated verbatim in the column titled 'comments'. The results are presented in Table 4.28.

TABLE 4.28

LANGUAGE OF MENTORING

LANGUAGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)	COMMENTS
English	66	66%	*Our mentees have different cultures and we are using different languages so that is why we are using English. It helps others to understand easily. *Completely understood without a hassle. *She can communicate in all different languages. *Because most subjects are taught in English it is important to use it even in our discussion. *Mostly because I don't speak ZULU. *Very good, although it is not his first language. *Our mother tongues are not the same so it was useful to communicate in English. *Hardly anyone speaks French here. *My mentor is Zulu speaking and I am Sepedi speaking. *It is good because we don't talk the same language. *Easier for me as an international student
Afrikaans	-	-	
Zulu (Isizulu)	33	33%	*Because we communicate and understand each other. *That is because Zulu is our mother tongue. *Sometimes with other mentees. *It makes us understand better. *We are both Zulu speakers *Home language. Easy to understand.
Xhosa (Isixhosa)	1	1%	
Swazi (Isiswazi)	-	-	
Southern Sotho (Sesotho)	-	-	
Northern Sotho (Sipedi)	-	-	
Tswana (Setswana)	-	-	
Tsonga (Shitsonga)	-	-	
Ndebele	-	-	
Venda	-	-	
Other	-	-	
TOTAL	**100**	**100%**	

Sixty six percent (66%) of students have indicated that English is the language most frequently used in mentoring, followed by 33% who have indicated that Isizulu is the language of mentoring and one percent (1%) that has indicated that Isixhosa is the language of mentoring. The fact that 33% of mentees use the medium of Isizulu is consistent with the demographic profile of the region.

Interpretation of responses

It would seem that English is the preferred medium of communication, since it is easier to use a common lingua franca. The use of English, for all intents and purposes, serves a practical purpose – the easy resolution to the issue of language, communication and

access to information. At the same time, mentees who speak Isizulu seem to indicate that mother-tongue communication facilitates conceptual understanding, and possibly a deeper understanding of the content of disciplines.

4.2.3.4 Would you recommend the student mentorship programme to other students?

This question is an indirect attempt to ascertain the value of the mentoring programme and its attractiveness to students as a form of support and enrichment. The results are presented in Table 4.29.

TABLE 4.29

RECOMMENDATION OF THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME TO OTHER STUDENTS

OPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	78	78%
No	8	8%
Unsure	15	14%
TOTAL	**101**	**100%**

Seventy eight percent (78%) of mentees have indicated that they would recommend the student mentorship programme to other students.

Motivate your response.

In motivating their response, students have provided the following statements presented in Appendix D6 Table 4.30 and Table 4.31. The responses are divided into positive and negative categories.

Interpretation of responses

The responses indicate that mentees have experienced the benefits of the student mentorship programme in the following respects:

a. Mentees have made consistent reference to the role of the student mentorship programme in facilitating the transition from school to university. They have emphasised the big gap and difference between the school and the university. Initially, the greatest challenge for mentees is to adapt and adjust as quickly and as comfortably as possible to the demands of the university. There is overwhelming support for the student mentorship programme with a view to settling into university life. The need for intense support at the beginning of the academic year is supported by Upcraft & Gardner (1984). They refer to the concept of front loading, which requires that the greater part of meaningful effective learning takes place early on and on a large scale.

b. Mentees have also pointed out that the easy and free flow of information between the mentee and the mentor has allowed them to ask a range of questions without embarrassment and begin to understand the real purpose of higher education. Another benefit was that mentees were able to draw on mentors' past experiences, thereby avoiding similar problems and eliminating stress.

c. Mentors assisted mentees in getting to know the campus in terms of where and how to access information and further assistance. For example, they were directed to various units on campus, lecture venues, cloakrooms, etc.

d. The positive attributes of the mentor have made an impression on the mentee in no uncertain terms. The exchange and balancing of ideas and views had an empowering and energising effect on learners. The process of role-modelling was evident here and confirms the view of Lewis (2001: 59) that the mentee admires the mentor for his/her seniority, position and achievement.

e. One of the early needs of the mentee is to adjust to lectures. Mentors have a significant role to play in this regard by imparting skills and sharing past experience.

The responses clearly indicate that in order for mentoring to be successful, mentors must have a clear understanding of their roles and communicate this to their mentees. Furthermore, mentors' commitment to the programme will determine the extent of the success of such programme.

4.2.3.5 What were the 5 most important things you learnt from the student mentorship programme?

In order to develop and enhance the content of the programme, it is essential to identify the most beneficial to mentees in terms of what they have learnt. This question also helps to identify the salient needs of first year students. Mentees are required to list the five most important things they have learnt from the programme.

The responses have been categorised from the most important thing a mentee has learnt from the student mentorship programme through to the fifth most important. Within each of the categories, the frequency of responses as described by students is given. For example, the word 'communication' has appeared eleven times in the response. The frequency is then calculated to a percentage, which in this case is 16%. The responses are presented in Appendix D7 Table 4.32, Table 4.33, Table 4.34, Table 4.35 and Table 4.36.

Interpretation of responses

The responses presented in Table 4.32 are consistent with earlier responses in that adaptation and adjustment to the university remain the most important need among first year students. Adaptation is followed by communication and self-confidence, indicating that students require clear, articulate and unambiguous communication in both the written and oral form. The third highest score relates to coping academically, accessing resources, and time-management. This is followed by mentees' need to be able to get along with others and become responsible and independent. The remainder of things learnt appear as individual items that are self-explanatory as they appear in the table.

The second most important thing learnt from the student mentorship programme, as presented in Table 4.33, is similar to the responses listed in the first most important thing learnt from the student mentorship programme. Additional items are self-explanatory.

The third most important thing learnt from the student mentorship programme, as presented in Table 4.34, appears to follow the logic of the stages of mentoring. The highest ranking item in the third most important thing learnt from the programme, is getting to know the facilities and resources on the campus, followed by understanding the daily routine on campus and then coming to terms with the academic demands that students have to deal with. Mentees have illustrated the academic demands by breaking them down into specifics, such as the expectations of lecturers, preparing for tests and examinations and accessing the library. Interestingly, mentees have also specified the development of personal and social qualities such as discipline, motivation, friendliness, self-confidence, and a positive attitude – amongst others. These views find support in the findings of Reilly (1992), Murray & Owen (1992), Hairston (2000) and Lewis (1996). The responses clearly support the proposition that personal, social and academic mentoring are intertwined processes.

Items rated as the fourth most important thing learnt from the student mentorship programme, the results of which are presented in Table 4.35, relate largely to academic issues linked to personal features required for academic success. Mentees hold the view that setting objectives, being helpful, being motivated, social integration and self-assertiveness are necessary ingredients for academic success. Much of what they claim to have learnt are habits that have enabled them to cope with various challenges. These were described by mentees in terms such as *"learning skills such as self-reliance and self independence in order to get along or cope with university life."* There is evidence to indicate that the student mentorship programme has succeeded in creating an awareness of the purpose and value of higher education. This is a higher level need, and not surprisingly, appears much later in the rank of most important things learnt from the student mentorship programme. Other things learnt include: dealing with pressure, how to study, having a positive attitude, self-reliance and independence.

The number and frequency of responses on the fifth most important thing learnt from the student mentorship programme, as presented in Table 4.36, have decreased – most of which have already been repeated. Issues such as HIV-AIDS, communicating with senior students, organising workshops and accessing information from books emerge as new items. Items such as coping, self-assertiveness, studying harder and time-management appear lower down in the list. Mentees also indicate that they have learnt the value of being helpful, persevering, sharing and developing skills in preparation for tests and examinations. These responses indicate that mentoring has a strong potential to instil positive habits in students and build confidence.

4.2.3.6 List 5 weaknesses of the student mentorship programme.

An evaluation of a programme must include an assessment of weaknesses that need to be exposed and addressed. Mentees were required to identify five weaknesses of the mentoring programme.

The responses have been categorised from the most important weakness of the student mentorship programme to the fifth most important weakness. Within each of the categories, the frequency of responses as students have described them is given. For example, the fact that mentors are not well informed about their jobs appeared 6 times. The frequency is then calculated to a percentage. The responses are presented in Appendix D8 Table 4.37, Table 4.38, Table 4.39, Table 4.40 and table 4.41.

Interpretation of responses:

The most important weaknesses as presented in Table 4.37 point toward a lack of understanding of mentoring among mentors. This has clearly been one of the most important weaknesses of the programme. It seems to have had a negative impact on the mentors' ability to communicate, interact with and make themselves accessible to mentees. These weaknesses correlate with some of the issues raised by Lewis (2000: 32) in his description of a good mentor. Among the positive qualities he identifies, Lewis

(2000: 32) states that mentor accessibility and the ability to communicate are critical factors. Yet, the responses indicate that commitment among mentors and the content of mentoring seem to be poorly understood by mentors. A worrying point is that some students do not take the programme seriously. The other responses indicate that there are logistical issues such as the size of the mentorship venue (consultation room), its location, distance, arrangements for consultation and the duration of mentoring that have had a negative impact on the mentoring process.

The second most important weaknesses are presented in Table 4.38. While the responses may be few as compared to the previous questions, it should, nevertheless, be noted that the following factors, identified as weaknesses by mentees, are most likely to determine the success of the mentoring programme and need to be addressed.

a. Mentors should have a detailed understanding of the programme and be able to render a service that is needed by first year students. In this regard, mentors should have an inclusive and deep understanding of the nature of mentoring, and be able to provide answers on a possible way for mentees to proceed. If unable to do so, mentors should be able to refer mentees to those who can communicate the aims, goals and objectives of the programme.
b. Mentors should not only possess characteristics such as kindness, a caring attitude, punctuality and positive attitudes, but also be able to visibly demonstrate these characteristics to students.
c. A curriculum for mentoring is essential in giving structure, focus and guidance to the process of mentoring.
d. Mentors should also have skills to help mentees build healthy relationships that are conducive to meaningful learning.

The third most important weaknesses are presented in Table 4.39. At least five of the responses indicate weaknesses among mentors themselves, while one of the responses relates to the logistics of the programme. It would appear that mentors ought to be far more committed, available, accessible and knowledgeable about student needs. Issues

such as fatigue among mentees need to be addressed in the context of teaching coping strategies.

The fourth most important weaknesses are presented in Table 4.40. The responses are almost similar to those received in the previous question. The issue of mentors being available, accessible and interested in mentees seems to be a recurring theme. The implications of race and gender seem to play themselves out in the social and personal context of mentoring. While some mentees are of the opinion that more white mentors are needed in the programme, others have stated that female mentees are susceptible to abuse by their male mentors. With regard to race and gender, it would appear that the area of matching mentors to mentees might require greater attention. The area of matching mentors to mentees is raised as an area of concern by Merriam (1983) as one that is complex and susceptible to the abuse of power.

The fifth most important weaknesses are presented in Table 4.41. The one response is consistent with the feedback received from mentees in the previous two questions. The issue of mentor availability needs to be addressed seriously. Ways and means need to be identified to address this weakness. Brian O'Neill as cited in Lewis (2000: 32) emphasise that the lack of psychological, emotional and physical inaccessibility may hinder effective mentoring.

The above views concur with that of Parsloe (1992: 71) who states that mentors should be good motivators, perceptive, able to support the objectives of the programme and fulfil their responsibilities towards their menrtee.

4.2.3.7 What improvements would you like to see to the mentorship programme?

Like the previous two questions, this question aims to identify aspects of the programme that were dysfunctional and need to be improved upon. Suggestions can only serve to enhance future provisions and initiatives. The responses are presented in Appendix D9 Table 4.42.

Interpretation of responses:

The feedback indicates that mentor commitment, mentor awareness of their roles and participation in other activities need to be improved. Mentor availability has once again emerged as a pressing issue. Reilly (1992) identifies the willingness to want to devote time to the process of mentoring as one of the key attributes of a good mentor. Yet, consistently, mentors indicate this as a weakness. Other areas that require attention are:

a. developing communication skills;
b. gaining access to examination papers;
c. mentors should have a wider and deeper knowledge than mentees;
d. having a bigger number of mentors; and
e. exposure to a larger range of extra-mural activities.

The above needs to be addressed in order to improve the scope of the programme. Access to examination papers seems to be a recurring theme in peer mentoring. This clearly points to the fact that access to assessment practices is a key need among first year students and that this aspect needs to be integrated into the peer mentoring curriculum. Singular responses like additional time, more mentors, more motivated mentors and punctuality must not be taken lightly.

4.2.3.8 Would you consider being a mentor?

Like question 4.2.3.4, this question is an indirect question that aims to assess the impact of the mentoring programme on mentees and its perceived benefits to students. It gives an indication as to the degree of the success of the programme. The results are presented in Table 4.43.

TABLE 4.43

CONSIDERING BEING A MENTOR

OPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	74	74%
No	14	13%
Unsure	13	13%
TOTAL	**101**	**100%**

An overwhelming majority (74%) indicated that they would consider being a mentor. The response indicates that there is a need for peer mentoring, that its implementation was fairly successful and that mentees, by virtue of being exposed to all aspects of the programme, feel confident enough to want to become mentors.

An overwhelming majority (74%) of mentees indicated that they would consider being a mentor. The response reveals that there is a need for peer mentoring, that its implementation was fairly successful and that mentees, by virtue of being exposed to all aspects of the programme, feel confident enough to want to become mentors.

Motivate your response.

The responses provided by mentees have been grouped into both positive and negative categories and presented in Appendix D10 Table 4.44 and Table 4.45, and is followed by an interpretation.

Interpretation of responses

In terms of the positive responses presented in Table 4.44, 30% of mentees reported that they would like to help. The consistent use of the verb 'help' indicates that peer mentoring is perceived as a relationship where one assists another in making the transition from school to university. Underlying this notion of help are issues of shared experience, mutual understanding, role modelling, friendliness, commitment, returning a good service and social skills. It is also interesting to note that some mentees have made reference to mentor irresponsibility, the lack of mentor commitment and unskilled

mentors – all of which have been identified as a basis upon which they would improve on their own roles as mentors.

The negative responses forwarded by mentees, as presented in Table 4.45, demonstrate a sense of maturity and a deep understanding of what it takes to be a mentor. The responses also indicate a level of reflective and introspective thinking. None of the responses provided indicate that the programme was unsuccessful. Instead, the responses indicate that qualities required for being a good mentor are: patience, a good heart, being hard working, being able to balance and adjust time, having skills and being motivated. Given this kind of honesty in mentees' responses, the researcher is of the opinion that these mentees have the potential to become good mentors. It would be useful to extend this feedback into a focus group interview.

4.2.3.9 List 3 of the best qualities manifested by your mentor.

Peer mentoring is about human relationships, empathy, kindness and generosity. It is about negotiating meaning around difficult issues that have a bearing on students' academic performance. Often there are no answers – just more questions. The transactional nature of interaction between mentors and mentees is fraught with tension, unease and sometimes apprehension. All of this demands much of the mentor in terms of time, patience, skills and knowledge. The energy required in helping others empower themselves can be consuming. Not all students make good mentors. Much of the success of mentoring depends on commitment. This question aims to identify those qualities of the mentor that made the greatest impact on mentees. The responses are presented in Appendix D11 Table 4.46, Table 4.47 and Table 4.48.

Interpretation of responses

In terms of the responses presented in Table 4.46, friendliness and communication (12.82%) rank the highest among the best quality exhibited by the mentor. These are followed by individual personal characteristics such as kindness, approachability, helpfulness, honesty and academic knowledge. The remainder of the descriptions need to

be noted as characteristics that need to be inculcated among mentors. The adjectives of friendliness and communication resonate with much of the literature on positive mentoring relationships. For example, Hairston (2000), Frey & Noller (1983), Reilly (1992), Megginson & Clutterbuck (1997) and Lewis (2000) identify communication as essential to effective mentoring.

In terms of the responses presented in Table 4.47, the second best quality exhibited by the mentor are consistent with the feedback received in the previous question. Additional qualities listed are leadership, access to exam questions, attitude and reliability.

In terms of the responses presented in Table 4.48, the third best quality exhibited by the mentor is the attributes of being helpful, friendly and communicative. The feedback is consistent with the feedback received from the previous two questions. Additional qualities were described by terms such as trustworthiness, protectiveness, supportive, interested, funny, well-organised, being able to counsel and give advice, and helping to get to know others.

4.2.3.10 List 3 of the worst qualities manifested by your mentor.

Question 4.2.3.10 is the opposite of question 4.2.3.9. It aims to achieve the same goals but in terms of the inverse. The responses are presented in Appendix D12 Table 4.49, Table 4.50 and table 4.51.

Interpretation of responses:

In terms of the responses presented in Table 4.49, the worst qualities exhibited by the mentor are qualities such as a lack of punctuality, confidence and communication. These qualities are clearly essential elements of successful peer mentoring. That some mentors are seen as not exhibiting these qualities, points toward their importance. Responses such as "treats it as a duty" and "lack of enthusiasm" indicate that mentoring should be a human and social process undertaken by committed people. Issues such as laziness, not

being informed and not paying attention, indicate that mentees have a heightened perception of both the overt and covert qualities of mentors.

The second worst quality exhibited by the mentor are presented in Table 4.50. What becomes clear from the responses is the mentees' perceptiveness. Mentees are sensitive enough to sense that mentors are not interested. A further weakness manifested by mentors is a lack of access to mentors, their academic and social distance and their lack of seriousness.

The third worst quality exhibited by the mentor are presented in Table 4.51. The feedback is consistent with that received in the previous two questions. A lack of responsibility, enthusiasm and uncertainty are clearly issues that need to be addressed.

4.2.3.11 Do you feel that the student mentorship programme can improve the student pass rate?

One of the key goals of peer mentoring is to improve the pass rate. This question aims to identify whether SMP can achieve this, and to find reasons as to how and why this can be achieved. The results are presented in Table 4.52.

TABLE 4.52

THE POTENTIAL OF THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME TO IMPROVE THE PASS RATE

OPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	75	75%
No	3	3%
Unsure	23	22%
TOTAL	**101**	**100%**

An overwhelming response of 75% indicates that the student mentorship programme has the potential to improve the pass rate.

Motivate your response.

The responses are grouped into positive and negative categories and presented in Appendix D13 Table 4.53 and Table 4.54.

Interpretation of responses

Since the issue of increasing the pass rate is the basis upon which the peer-mentoring programme was designed, the responses forwarded require a much deeper and more critical analysis. Some of the interpretations provided, would be supported by verbatim quotes from students. These responses, presented in Appendix D13 Table 4.53, have been grouped into the following themes:

Early mentoring

There is the response that mentoring must begin early, since it has the potential to address problems of adjustment and coping among first year students. While this may be the case, recognition is also given to the fact that in this reciprocal relationship between the mentor and the mentee, the mentor needs to be committed to the process of change, development and progress, and that the onus for ultimate success rests with the mentee. Part of the success of early mentoring is the potential to identify specific weaknesses and make referrals, via the system of networking, where mentors who are unable to assist mentees may refer them to those who can. For example, *"Students get help from mentors, and if they cannot help they refer you to someone else."* An early awareness of the presence of resources on campus seems to help with adjustment as indicated by the following quote *"Since mentors have experience, they can get you the resources you require in order to adapt."* The significant role of the networker is supported by La Rose: 1995) who defines a mentor as someone who assists mentees in getting linked to significant resources on campus. Upcraft & Gardner (1984) and Gardner (1986) lend support to the notion of early intervention. They are of the view that the initial part of the academic year must be filled with meaningful experiences. In concurrence with this view, Boyer (1987) states that the first year experience must create a sense of community, belonging, identity and purpose.

An all inclusive learning process driven by the need to succeed academically

The word "help" has been mentioned at least 30 times in the feedback. The consistent use of this adjective indicates that peer mentoring is about one who is in need of assistance and one who is able to provide it. The responses with regard to improving the pass rate clearly indicate that the key area of focus centres around addressing the academic aspect in tandem with the psychosocial. But clearly, addressing the academic aspect is paramount to increasing the pass rate – as indicated by comments such as *"Mentorship is about academic progress"; "Because we get all the help academically from our mentors"; "Do what the mentor teaches you and you will pass"* and *"They assist us academically."* Underlying the success of academic mentoring, are issues such as encouragement, motivation, social acceptance and dealing with alienation.

Rethinking the purpose of the traditional curriculum

The traditional curriculum incorporates the basic elements of teaching and learning – lectures, tutorials, study material, assignments, tests and examinations. In the feedback from mentees, there is consistent reference to *"my mentor explains", "my mentor helps you understand your work", "mentors help in solving problems", "my mentor makes sure we understand tutorials", "...my mentor shows us ways to learn for tests", "gives students tips on learning their books"* and *"...how to go about answering questions".* Reference to obtaining past test and examination papers has been made six times. This has been a recurrent theme throughout the feedback received from mentees. Preparation for tests and examinations seem to be an important need. The full gamut of assessment and its practices therefore occupy a central role in the mentoring curriculum. It would also seem that neither the lecture nor the tutorial is able to provide the kinds of in-depth, reciprocal and meaningful academic experiences most needed by students.

The response, *"Many times students learn more from their peers, and mentors offer different and easier ways to study, which will enable the student to pass"* is an all-encompassing statement, pointing to the deep and far-reaching effects of peer mentoring on student academic development, if applied correctly. There is abundant support for the need for this form of collaborative learning. For example, Johnson et al (1991: 27) claim

that depending on the goal, the student, the content and the teacher, the most effective method of teaching in higher education is when peers teach other peers. McKeachie et al (1986: 63) and Boud et al (2001: 17) claim that peer teaching is extremely effective for a wide range of goals, content and teaching methods. The feedback also indicates that peer mentoring is a far more interactive and engaging process of learning. The process begins to close the gaps between lectures and tutorials in a manner that deals with a range of student inadequacies, as supported by the following statement: *"...knowing exactly where the lack of knowledge is"*. The responses also highlight the need to review the traditional methods of teaching and learning – methods that do not necessarily have any meaningful impact on students, since there is a physical and intellectual distance between the two. Such distance render the content of disciplines inaccessible to students as also espoused by Mann (2001) in her construct of the shift in education from a search for truth to one of pragmatism.

The logic of the above responses suggests that academia needs to look at newer ways of doing things. It should be acknowledged that the current manner of teaching and learning is not necessarily effective, and that curriculum, especially the "how "of teaching and learning, needs to reflect and resonate with student needs and student experiences. There is thus a need for greater engagement among teachers and students. In this regard, Bruffee (1999: xii) maintains that professors are not purveyors of information but "... agents of cultural change who marshal interdependence among student peers." They further claim: "...collaborative learning must marshal the power of interdependence among peers so that students can learn better, more thoroughly, more deeply and more efficiently."

A point of consolidation and integration – learning styles versus forms of assessment:

Responses such as: *"They act as tutors and lecturers if necessary"*, *"My mentor makes sure we understand tutorials and shows us ways to learn for tests"* and *"Because if you haven't heard what the lecturer said you will get help"* indicate that at the point of mentoring, a consolidation of learning occurs. It would seem that mentoring provides the

opportunity and forum where mentees are able to tie up all loose ends, review past learning experiences with a mutually trusted other, and integrate the content of the lecture and the tutorial. In many respects, mentoring is an extension of the formal curriculum as supported by the statements: *"During consultation we can share our academic problems", "You can get help from 3 different sources", "My mentor makes sure we understand tutorials and shows us ways to learn for tests", "Yes, because it acknowledges the subjects you do not understand", "It helps with any problems that we do not understand as well as improve our work rate", "As the mentors are to be experienced students, chosen to help others. They should offer advice on how to study (better study methods) for certain subjects and maybe even tutor a little as they have done the same thing in most cases."*

It would appear that the above is largely achieved by two processes – being able to match the teaching method with the mentee's individual style of learning and engaging in reciprocal discussions that incorporate all elements of assessment, as evidenced by the statement *"If students aren't afraid of asking questions they can learn what may help them in their tests."* This statement indicates that assessment as in being instant and assessment as in unlearning and relearning are at the core of the discussions when it comes to preparation for tests and examinations.

This analysis is consistent with the research findings presented by the researcher at the International Consortium of Educational Development (ICED) conference in Perth, Australia in July 2002 and at the XV World Congress of Sociology held in Brisbane, Australia in July 2002.

Interpretation of negative responses:

The negative feedback, presented in Table 4.54, is consistent with the previous responses. Firstly, there is an acknowledgement that an improvement in the pass rate depends largely on the student's commitment. Secondly, mentors need to be very committed. Thirdly, the value of the programme needs to be brought to the awareness of first year

students. Fourthly, mentoring must deal with the issue of tests, examinations and broader assessment practices.

4.2.3.12 Do you feel that students are more likely to continue with their studies because of their participation in the student mentorship programme?

A key goal of SMP is to improve student retention in the higher education system. This question aims to identify whether SMP can achieve this, and to provide reasons as to how and why this may be achieved. The responses are presented in Table 4.55.

TABLE 4.55
THE PERCEIVED POTENTIAL OF THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME IN IMPROVING STUDENT RETENTION

OPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	49	49%
No	15	15%
Unsure	36	36%
TOTAL	**101**	**100%**

While the bigger proportion of the responses is positive (49%), at least 36% are unsure. This must indicate that there isn't much confidence in the ability of the student mentorship programme to improve the retention of students on campus.

Motivate your response

The responses are grouped into positive and negative categories and presented in Appendix D14 Table 4.56 and Table 4.57.

Interpretation of positive responses

The positive responses, as presented in Table 4.56, suggest that the supportive role played by mentors contributes to the issue of retention on campus. The mentor is able to encourage, motivate and help at crucial times. The mentor also steps in at critical times, as indicated by the statement: *"Sometimes if you do not pass all your courses, it is likely*

recommended that you consult your mentor, so as to get a solution to your problem whereby the situation may be saved." The feedback, however, is not convincing enough to lead one to believe that peer mentoring has a great potential when it comes to increasing student retention.

Interpretation of negative responses:

The negative responses, as presented in Table 4.57, indicate that if students feel strongly about leaving campus, they will. It seems that mentorship can do very little in such cases. What needs to be investigated are the reasons why students feel this way. This aspect must be included in follow-up research.

4.2.3.13 Read through the following definitions and rate the following items, according to the scale from 1 to 5, in terms of the extent to which the descriptions fit a mentor.

5 - Fully agree

4 - Agree

3 - Average

2 - Disagree

1 - Fully disagree

***An opportunity provider (advocate) creates opportunities for people to learn or to develop competence (Lewis, 2000: 1-26).**

***An interpreter transmits the culture of the university by virtue of knowing the ropes (Lewis, 2000: 1-26).**

***A process consultant helps the learner make sense of the broader requirements of the specific relationship by defining objectives, monitoring progress, solving problems, etcetera (Lewis, 2000: 1-26).**

***A learning consultant acts as a consultant adviser on matters associated with learning (Lewis, 2000: 1-26).**

***A coach intervenes directly to pass on knowledge (Lewis, 2000: 1-26).**

***A counsellor acts in the best interests of students by having a high degree of empathy and communication skills. The mentor can be described as a friend, adviser, guide, guardian and so on (Lewis, 2000: 1-26).**

Mentors assume many roles in the course of their engagement with mentees. Six (6) key roles: opportunity provider, interpreter, process consultant, learning consultant, coach and counsellor have been identified. Mentees are required to identify the extent to which their mentors fit the description of each one of these roles. The responses are presented in Table 4.58.

TABLE 4.58

DESCRIPTION OF MENTORS' ROLES

ITEM	5	4	3	2	1	TOTAL
Opportunity provider	29%	39%	25%	5%	2%	**100%**
Interpreter	16%	27%	46%	6%	5%	**100%**
Process consultant	21%	32%	35%	7%	5%	**100%**
Learning consultant	33%	28%	29%	5%	5%	**100%**
Coach	28%	28%	38%	3%	3%	**100%**
Counsellor	24%	24%	18%	31%	3%	**100%**

Interpretation of responses:

A large number of mentees (33%) fully agree that a mentor serves as a learning consultant. Clearly then, a key function of the mentor is to advise students on matters associated with learning. The response is consistent with those received in respect of question 4.2.3.5. At least 29% fully agree that a mentor is an opportunity provider. Therefore, a mentor plays a key role in creating opportunities for mentees to learn and develop competence. Twenty eight percent (28%) fully agree that a mentor serves as a coach intervening to pass on knowledge directly. Twenty four percent (24%) fully agree that a mentor serves as a counsellor. If the responses under the category 'agree' and

'fully agree' are combined, the role of the mentor can be ranked, from the most significant to the less significant, as follows:

a. Opportunity provider (68%)
b. Learning consultant (61%)
c. Coach (56%)
d. Process consultant (53%)
e. Counsellor (48%)
f. Interpreter (41%)

In terms of the above ranking, a mentor is seen as someone who highlights and creates opportunities for his/her mentees. Mentees see these opportunities as essential to developing their own competence. The second highest-ranking description is that of the mentor being a learning consultant. This is not surprising, in the light of the fact that mentees constantly require advice on matters associated with learning. The response is consistent with the response received to question 4.2.3.5. The description of a coach ranks third highest. This indicates that mentors are often called upon to intervene directly in order to pass on knowledge. The description of a process consultant ranks fourth, indicating that mentors must define broader objectives to mentees, monitor their progress and solve problems. The differences between the responses are not substantial, varying from 3% to 7%. Therefore, the fifth and sixth ranking descriptions of the mentor as a counsellor and an interpreter only indicate its relative importance when compared to the ranking of the other descriptions of the role of a mentor. Further, counselling and interpreting are higher-level skills that mentors do not necessarily possess.

The results also indicate that the mentor serves multiple roles – an issue highlighted by Lewis (2000). The mentor may be called upon to play many roles at any given time or serve only as a learning consultant or an opportunity. However, this might be rare. The multiplicity of roles played by the mentor must be viewed in relation to the multiplicity of needs and shortcomings of mentees. Against the context of socially defined human relationships, a mentor serves to push the boundaries, stretch the imagination and expand

the parameters of learning that mentees have been confined to. A mentor therefore engages with his or her mentee in the systematic expansion of mentee's capacity to engage successfully with all aspects of the environment.

With the exception of 33% of mentees who disagree on the role of the mentor as a counsellor, the combined negative responses (for the categories 'disagree' and 'fully disagree') are less than 12%, and therefore insignificant.

4.2.3.14 Write a brief narrative (paragraph) on your experience of the mentorship programme. This question is optional.

In past research conducted by the researcher, a great deal of hidden information was elicited through the question of a narrative. The narrative tells a story of human experience, and in telling their stories respondents are uninhibited, for they are free to describe their experience from the heart and the soul. It is this frank disclosure that allows for a deeper understanding of the issues we are seeking to address. Since the narrative is not popular with many respondents, the question has remained optional. The responses are presented in Appendix D15, Table 4.59 and followed by an interpretation and critique.

Interpretation of responses

The responses indicate that the positive experience of mentoring far outweigh the negative. The feedback is consistent with those received in 4.2.3.2, 4.2.3.8 and 4.2.3.9 and supports the view that the impact of mentoring on mentees has been positive. Critical issues noted are successful adjustment, positive role-modelling, mentor's positive attributes and ultimate academic success. In comparison to the positive attributes, the negative responses are stated quite boldly and related mainly to mentors being inaccessible, lacking commitment, unable to communicate and sustain a mentoring relationship. In the researcher's view, the problem of mentor inaccessibility has been one of the most difficult aspects of the programme and one that has been a recurring issue. The general training of mentors has been discussed in 2.4.4.b. The elements mentioned

above inform the kind of training mentees receive and the content of the training workshops.

4.3 ANALYSES AND INTERPRETATION OF RESPONSES RECEIVED FROM MENTORS IN THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

The researcher led the focus group interview with assistance from the faculty co-ordinator. The aim of the focus group interview was to establish the views of mentors with the regard to the questions identified in a to j.

4.3.1 Analysis of Section A – Independent Variables

A quota sample of ten percent (10%) of the total number of mentors within each faculty and within each racial group was selected. Ten percent is an acceptable representation of the population of mentors (Refer to 3.5.7). In terms of the stratified quota random sampling procedure applied to mentors and presented in Table 3.2, 15 mentors were required to participate in the study. The 15 mentors selected did participate in the study and their profile is presented in Table 4.59. The researcher notes that Table 3.2 is the same as Table 4.60. However, for ease of reference and analysis, the table has been represented. Mentors were divided into three groups of five each. Table 4.60 indicates the number of mentors per faculty, the gender breakdown of mentors, the quota sample of mentors and the number of male and female mentors selected for the interview.

TABLE 4.60

NUMBER OF MENTORS SELECTED PER DISCIPLINE INCLUDING GENDER BREAKDOWN

FACULTY	NO. OF MENTORS	NUMBER OF MENTORS -GENDER		TEN PERCENT QUOTA SAMPLE	NUMBER OF MALE AND FEMALE MENTORS INTERVIEWD	
		MALE	FEMALE		MALE	FEMALE
Commerce & Management	41	19	22	4	2	2
Engineering	20	19	1	2	2	1
Health Sciences	16	3	13	2	1	1
Humanities	27	13	14	3	1	1
Law	21	18	13	2	1	1
Science	20	13	7	2	1	1
TOTAL	**145**	**75**	**70**	**15**	**8**	**7**

In Chapter 3, a stratified quota random sampling procedure was applied to the selection of mentors. The final sample to be drawn was presented in Table 3.2. In terms of Table 3.2, 15 mentors, of whom 8 should be male and 7 female, were to be drawn from the different faculties. Table 4.60 indicates the exact number of mentors, identified in terms of faculty and gender that participated in the study. The researcher did not see the need to provide a further breakdown in terms of race, language and age for the following reasons.

In terms of race, twelve of the 15 mentors selected are of African origin whereas three mentors are of Indian origin. There were no white and coloured mentors who participated in the study.

In terms of language, the three Indian mentors spoke English as a first language. Six mentors spoke Isizulu as a first language and English as a second language. Another four mentors spoke IsiXhosa as a first language and English as a second language. Two of the mentors spoke Sesotho as a first language and English as a second language. All mentors claimed to be proficient in the use of the English language as well as the mother tongue. According to the mentors, the mother tongue was used in mentoring sessions when the need arose.

In terms of age, the ages of mentors who participated in the focus group interview are between 20 and 25 years. The ages of mentees who participated in the study, as shown in Table 4.1, indicate that ninety five percent (95%) of mentees are between 17 and 22 years. When comparing these two sets of figures it is evident that there is a narrow age gap between mentors and mentees thereby fitting the criteria of what constitutes a peer mentor.

Mentors serve as conduits between the mentee and the institution. As middle and mediating components of the programme, their feedback and views are invaluable and cannot be ignored. The rationale behind these questions has already been explained in 3.5.6. The following questions guided the discussions that ensued in the focus group interview. These questions have been selected on the basis of the identified aims, objectives and goals of the mentorship programme. The questions cover the various facets of mentoring, including issues linked to the broader purpose of mentoring, the perceived needs of first year students, the manner in which the mentoring process has unfolded and the ultimate impact of mentoring on students. Issues such as the impact of capacity building workshops and infra-structural support are also explored. The questions were presented in the following order, as indicated in 4.3.1 to 4.3.10. The key words in questions a to d have been underlined for the purpose of emphasis.

a. How would you describe the needs of first year students?
b. How do faculty mentors see the broader purpose of mentoring?
c. How do faculty mentors see the objectives of mentoring?
d. How do faculty mentors define and describe their roles as mentors?
e. How do faculty mentors actually practise mentoring?
f. What are your views on the planning, organisation and implementation of the Student Mentorship Programme (SMP)?
g. What is your experience of the capacity building workshops for mentors?
h. Did your participation in the mentorship programme as a mentor contribute to your professional development?
i. Does SMP help in advancing the goals of the institution?

j. What are the weaknesses, pitfalls and problem areas?

The feedback received from mentors is presented in a consolidated and summarised form. The group interview between the researcher and the mentors was recorded and then transcribed. The papers on which the interviews were transcribed were then pasted onto a wall. The researcher then read through the questions presented and the responses presented several times in order to make sense of the discussions. The reading and understanding of the content of the interview took place over a period of two months. The method of analysis of data derived from the method of content analysis as discussed in 3.5.11. This method and process was essential since it allowed for a deeper understanding, analysis and interpretation of the reciprocal and ongoing discussion. This particular method facilitated an identification of recurring themes. In retrospect, this method was useful. This task was exceptionally challenging, since the researcher had to read between the lines when interpreting the discussion and the conversations. The researcher had to pay close attention to the expressions, phrases, words and metaphors used by mentors when transcribing and interpreting. The researcher notes that there wasn't much discussion in the mother tongue, that is, the African languages. The researcher emphasises this point since the issue of language was raised as a challenge to the research in the introduction that needed to be addressed.

4.3.2 Analysis of Section B – Focus Group Discussion

The language of discussion was English, together with any other language the participants were familiar with. Since the researcher has a working knowledge of Isizulu, the researcher was able to understand and interpret communication when it occurred in Isizulu. In other instances, the researcher depended on the assistance of mentors and faculty co-ordinators in translating words and clarifying meaning – if and when the need arose. The analysis of the focus group interviews took the format outlined in 3.5.11. The themes, as they emerge from the group discussion, are presented and followed by an analysis, interpretation and synthesis. The themes identified are presented as a summary in Table 4.61, followed by a detailed discussion and interpretation.

TABLE 4.61

RECURRING THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

QUESTION	THEME 1	THEME 2	THEME 3	THEME 4	THEME 5
1. How would you describe the needs of first year students?	The need to be steered in the "right" direction	The need to have access to the content and canon of academia	Assistance in integrating the impact of various environmental influences on first year students		
2. How do faculty mentors see the broader purpose of mentoring?	Creating a purposeful learning environment outside the confines of the classroom	Creating the self-regulated learner through motivation	Contributing towards a responsible and informed citizenship		
3. How do faculty mentors see the specific objectives of mentoring?	Anchoring and grounding the mentee	Helping to keep the goal structure in the period of transition coherent	Aligning valuable own goals versus goals deemed important by "others"		
4. How do faculty mentors define and describe their roles as mentors?	Moving beyond the rhetoric of big brother and big sister	Acting as informal facilitators of learning	Serving as sounding board for ideas	Serving as catalysts, galvanisers and integrators of multiple environments	Giving voice to student concerns
5. How do faculty mentors actually practice mentoring?	Engaging in a socially complex process with mentees	Always trying to ensure a proper match with mentees	Balancing a structured approach versus random acts of kindness	Engaging in a transactional, collaborative and democratic process of learning	
6. What are your views on the planning, organization and implementation of SMP?	The need for a well thought-out plan – the mentoring curriculum	The need for structure and coherence	The need for clear communication and leadership		
7. What is your experience of the capacity building workshops for mentors?	An essential experience of capacity building workshops – relevant topics	Interactive and skilled presenters – training the trainer	Paving the path to professional development		
8. Did participation in the programme contribute to your professional development?	At the level of the individual	At the level of the professionals	As citizens engaging in a diverse society		
9. Does SMP help in advancing the goals of the institution?	Balancing the tension between institutional culture and student culture	Redefining learning in the context of passing tests and exams	A holistic approach to dealing with academically under-prepared students		
10. What are the weaknesses, pitfalls and problem areas?	Mentor commitment	Resources	Lack of clear leadership and management		

4.3.2.1 How would you describe the needs of first year students?

Mentors selected for the programme are mainly senior students who can be said to have overcome the hurdles of the first year at university. Since mentors are in a position to reflect on their earlier experience and compare it with that of their mentees, they are able to make a comparative analysis of what they perceive the needs of first year students to be. For this reason, the focus group discussion began with this question. The responses are grouped into the following three themes, from a to c, as they repeatedly emerged in the group discussion:

a. The need to be steered in the "right" direction

First year students are seen to lack an understanding of the kinds of influences and pressures they are likely to encounter at university. While many students will eventually adjust to the demands placed on them by academia, mentors felt that first year students need to be reined into the system through a process of gradual acculturation. This process will entail emphasizing the multiple and sometimes conflicting influences of the environment on students, ranging from peer pressure to dealing with academic challenges. Since many first year students are at a vulnerable stage in their lives and there is much freedom on campus, the possibilities of falling victim to the abuse of drugs, alcohol and sex were rife. In this regard, mentors saw their initial role as one of not only assisting in adjustment, but also talking to students, providing instrumental support, providing affirming co-operative help, and bringing the environment of the campus and its influences into congruence with the needs of the student. All of this helps to steer the student in the right direction. As one mentor had said: *"They need us to show them the right way. Because we have been through the system ourselves and know what pitfalls to avoid."* Underlying the above is the acknowledgement that it was the responsibility of mentors to impress upon their mentees the broader purpose of higher education, since most came from backgrounds where the issue of education was seen as important, but its breadth and depth was not internalised.

b. The need to have access to the content and canon of academia

A recurring theme, mentors were more than aware that the greatest challenge facing students was gaining access to the world of the institution and academia – its concepts, ideas, theories, discourse and ability to provide the kinds of answers students are seeking. Higher education, as seen by many first year students, is a means towards which one can improve one's economic condition in life. Mentors held the view that mentees had to access academia at two levels. The first is the level at which they would be able to mechanistically pass a test or an examination. The second level is where mentees were able to access knowledge for its own sake, that is, appropriating this knowledge for their personal intellectual development. This issue came across very clearly in the mentoring sessions where mentors were often required to assist mentees in understanding the history and origin of disciplines, as opposed to just simple conceptual understanding. It was often felt that the mainstream curriculum was inaccessible to students, and needed to be analysed and understood before mentees could even begin to engage with the content of the disciplines. Therefore, through a process of verbal and electronic (e-mail and internet) discussion, one-on-one interaction and interpretation, mentees acquire the ability to understand the context of their disciplines, are able to engage at higher levels of thought, linking all of this to the broader purpose of mentoring.

c. Assistance in integrating the impact of various environmental influences on first year students

The first year experience is defined by many different influences – both positive and negative – that collectively impact on the lives of students. All of these influences are meant to enhance students' experience of higher education in relation to their own personal development. Yet, experiencing these influences in fragments, in pieces and disjointedly, will only serve to further alienate students from the core mission of learning. Mentors were of the opinion that they played a useful role in the lives of first year students, because they were able to make mentees aware of the importance of dealing with issues of finance, accommodation, peer pressure and learning in an integrated and balanced manner. There was also a strong view that mentees should not be denied, or deny themselves, negative experiences, since being able to overcome these influences

only serves to build and strengthen them. The real issue with regard to negative environmental influences was the question of how one should deal with them. This is where mentors felt that they served as *"integrators of environmental influences"* in a manner that took both the negative and positive into account, by means of which students were propelled to higher levels of development.

These views are consistent with Bronfenbrenner's Person-Process-Context-Time model of ecological development (Bronfenbrenner, 1993: 10), which emphasises the role of peer culture as one which *"...encompasses the forces and processes that shape individual and collective life on campus in terms of identity, group membership, acceptable discourse and desirable behaviours."* Renn & Arnold (2002:273) argue that while outcomes have been studied, the process leading to such outcomes have rarely been the focus of research. The core principles of the ecological model as in Person-Process-Context-Time, suggest that students need to be assisted in a holistic and developmental manner. The feedback from mentors indicates that at the heart of learning and teaching is the reciprocal process by which mentees engage with the multiple layers in their environment, and that it is within this process that they, as facilitators, can play a meaningful role.

4.3.2.2 How do faculty mentors see the broader purpose of mentoring?

The purpose of mentoring is defined as making significant shifts in knowledge, work or thinking (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 1997:13). While the concept and textbook meaning of mentoring is easily understood, the process itself goes much deeper. This depth, combined with mentors' individual experiences, means that mentors are in a position to provide an account of their individual experience of mentoring and redefine the broader purpose of mentoring against this experience. The responses are grouped into the following three themes from a to c as they repeatedly emerged in the group discussion:

a. Creating a purposeful learning environment outside the confines of the classroom

Mentors felt strongly that the environmental influences on mentees can have severe negative repercussions for mentees. These environmental influences were described as in-class and out-of-class influences. The in-class influences had its specific set of both negative and positive challenges which mentors were required to address. However, while these could be addressed by teaching mentees skills such as taking notes, listening, summarising and self-discipline, the out-of class experience proved to be more challenging. First, there is the issue of peer pressure. Second is the issue of not having a meaningful set of activities to engage in when one is free, and third is the issue of not knowing how one can enrich one's life outside the classroom. There were two issues mentors felt strongly about. First, within the context of mentoring, the content of disciplines became much more interesting and engaging as opposed to what the traditional lecture and tutorial had to offer. Therefore, the out-of-class academic experience catered for largely by the mentor was seen to enhance the academic learning experience well beyond the confines of the classroom. The informality of the mentoring sessions, its discursive and easy nature, its potential to foster deep and sustained learning, its ability to recognise student diversity and give both recognition and respect to issues of diversity, seems to have had great appeal for both mentors and mentees. By engaging in this process, mentors themselves were beginning to develop their own professional skills.

b. Creating the self-regulated learners through motivation

In the closeness of the mentor-mentee relationship, many weaknesses of both the mentor and mentee emerge – the mentors' ability to mentor successfully and the mentees' ability to receive the wisdom of his/her mentor. In the one-on-one relationship, mentors are able to identify specific weaknesses of their mentees. They can begin to address these weaknesses in a non-threatening manner, thereby allowing the mentee to start building on his/her own strengths. It was strongly felt that the idea was to empower the mentee to the extent that he/she is able to become self-reliant and independent. The role of the mentor was seen to be one where he/she encouraged the mentee to become a self-regulated learner (seen to be a life-long skill), which in itself required the mentee to be

highly motivated. The question is: How does one encourage another to become a self-regulated learner? Mentors felt that this could be achieved by:

- Impressing on mentees the need to take full responsibility for their own learning;
- Emphasising the importance of setting both short-term and long-term goals;
- Emphasising the importance of never giving up, should one falter or fail; and
- Acknowledging that there is more than one way in which to resolve an issue.

c. Contributing towards a responsible and informed citizenship

As mentors progressed and advanced in their role as mentors, they began to perceive their roles as being greater than just teaching junior students. Mentors felt that there was a need to impress on mentees the obligation to be responsible in their own lives and the obligation to be responsible as citizens. This seemed trivial to the researcher at the time, but after transcribing the interviews, it was evident that mentors had a sense of pride in themselves and that they wanted to instil the same in their mentees. There was also a clear commitment to building the nation. Statements such as: *"Mentees must know that they have to contribute to nation building"* and *"Mentorship cannot just be about helping others. We are in a fortunate position to build character in the young"* point to the fact that mentors are mature enough to take their roles as both scholars and citizens seriously.

The need to enhance the out-of-class experience in tandem with the on-campus experience has been espoused by Astin (1975) who makes a case for greater involvement with students in terms of time, energy and commitment directed to on-campus activities. He concludes that "joiners are stayers". The need to empower mentees is in concurrence with the view of Lewis (2000: 32) who asserts that an empowering orientation allows for mentees to feel safe and try out different ways of doing things. Linked to this is the idea that mentors should be inventive. They should be open to new ideas and different ways of doing things. Further, they should be perceptive enough to see useful connections and patterns, as is evident in the mentors linking the concept of mentoring to the broader goals of citizenship. The aspects of discipline, setting and enforcing standards, evaluating mentee performance and fostering team-work as raised in the feedback are similar to those identified by Hairston (2000).

4.3.2.3 How do faculty mentors see the objectives of mentoring?

While the purpose of mentoring is defined broadly in point 4.2.2 above, the objectives are defined as specific goals, such as assisting in adjustment, developing coping skills, inculcating good habits that lead to success, and building mentees' psychosocial capacity. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that mentees are equipped with the skills for academic success. The responses are grouped into the following three themes from a to c as they repeatedly emerged in the group discussion.

a. Anchoring and grounding the mentee

While the feedback in the previous question indicates broader academic and social issues, the feedback in this question indicates specific activities that mentors engage in. Much of the feedback has been very descriptive and the adjectives used demonstrate the intensity with which mentors pursue the goals of mentoring. In the focus group interview, mentors demonstrated and gesticulated with their hands that first year students need to *be "nailed to the ground and in a sense controlled"*, until there is assurance that these students will complete their studies since there is *"...too much of freedom"*. The felt that some students *"cannot deal with the culture shock"*. While it is evident that external force is not necessarily effective in controlling people, there was an acknowledgement that mentors need to draw on their own internal resources to inspire mentees, to help them value education, to motivate them and to get them grounded. Mentors felt that their own personalities, knowledge and commitment would assist in ensuring that mentees find meaning in academia and remain focused on their academic work. Mentors felt that since most first year students are at a sensitive and vulnerable stage in their lives, the single most important objective of mentoring was to stabilise mentees and ensure that they have a sense of purpose. These issues must ideally be dealt with at the time of orientation.

Critical factors in ensuring the above are being able to reach out to students, gaining their confidence and trust, establishing a healthy and mutually satisfying relationship with them and working vigorously, incessantly and purposefully to ensure that first year students internalise the full experience of higher education. The full experience would

include the culture of academia, the culture of the institution, the diverse value systems in a democratic and multi-ethnic community, and ways in which these experiences can be understood and appreciated. There was emphasis on the fact that peer mentoring with first year students is a short-term but high impact programme.

b. Helping to keep the goal structure in the period of transition coherent

From their experience with mentees, mentors were of the opinion that first year students go through a range of varied and sometimes incomprehensible emotions. Initially, their mentees are frequently required to make decisions which may sometime result in a range of fragmented experiences leading to early failure and drop-out. An example stated was that: *"My mentee moved from the Faculty of Arts to the Faculty of Science to the Faculty of Commerce – all in three weeks. She wasted hundreds of rands on books she will not even use. And now she feels that she will fail the exam."* Another quote read: "*It is fine for students to experiment because this is their first experience of a university, but it cannot be at the expense of their sanity."* These statements demonstrate that while the goals of first year students may change often – sometimes justifiably – there needs to be a coherency and a logic to why these goals change. While students should be afforded the opportunity of making changes, these changes must occur within the framework of a coherent and meaningful academic experience. Mentors are of the opinion that as conduits between the institution and mentees, they are able to assist their mentees in maintaining a coherent and meaningful structure with regard to their goals, aspirations and changing decisions.

c. Aligning valuable own goals with goals deemed important by "others"

It is in the nature of an institution of higher learning that one is often faced with conflicting views, ideas and emotions. For example, a mentor said: *"Some first year students are bent on not taking their work seriously. This sets a bad example for other students who then fall under their influence and are unable to resist peer pressure. When you talk to these students they say that they are free to do what they want. But even if this is the case, surely they can take both work and play seriously."* Another mentor said: *"When it was too late my mentee realised that she had made a mistake. She was serious*

about studying but her friends were a bad influence. She is now regretting but it is too late." Yet another mentor stated: *"As a student I had a mind of my own. I was able to tell what was valuable to me and set goals accordingly. Even if I smoked and drank alcohol, it was within limits. So students must know where to draw the line."* The final comment made by a mentor was that: *"We need to impress on mentees that they need to be strong and resist temptation. Stick to their principles. Work hard and also have fun."* It would therefore seem that the objectives of mentoring encompasses a range of skills, from simple confidence building, motivation and assertiveness to being able to make important decisions affecting one's life.

The responses provided by mentors emphasise the challenging aspect of defining and setting goals for mentees. An acknowledgement is made that the area of goal setting links back to the mentees' own value system, culture and aspirations. For mentors, the challenge lay in being able to identify goals that are valuable to oneself and goals that are valuable to others. In her construct of the student as "outsider", Mann (2001) argues that there is a separation between the student (the outsider) and the institution (insider). Such a separation leads to conflicting feelings of separation from both the institutional culture and from one's own language, culture and aspirations. The consequence is that students begin to disengage from the core of institutional activities. She further claims that this manifestation is strongest among non-traditional, lower income and working class students. The challenge for mentors is to work out a strategy that clearly defines the manner in which they should reconcile their own goals with that of others and thereby maintain a balance.

4.3.2.4 How do faculty mentors define and describe their roles as mentors?

This question aims at analysing the specifics of the role of the mentor. Mentors are required to provide a detailed description of what they believe the role of a mentor should be. The responses are grouped into the following five themes from a to e as they repeatedly emerged in the group discussion.

a. Moving beyond the rhetoric of big brother and big sister

In communicating the concept of mentoring to first year students, the words big brother and big sister are often used to convey to mentors and mentees the helping and caring nature of mentors. Since these terms are easily understood, mentees begin to engage with mentors with particular expectations of the relationship and particular outcomes. Whereas the literature on peer mentors refers to the role of a "big-brother/sister" (La Rose, 1995), mentors are of the opinion that their role as mentors surpasses that of being a big brother and a big sister. While their role as mentors is underpinned by the element of caring, they see themselves as serving multiple roles – guide, counsellor, tutor, teacher, coach, point of referral, role-model and motivators. Lewis (2000) supports these views. He acknowledges that mentors play the above mentioned multiple roles. At any one point when mentees access the help of mentors, mentors have to be able to display a number of these qualities. Often, mentors are called upon to undertake responsibilities they are not skilled for, such as counselling. At best, mentors serve as points of referral and sources of reference. Unlike a big brother or a big sister, mentors are required to maintain a level of formal responsibility and accountability toward their mentees. Given the narrow age gap between the mentor and the mentee, the possibilities for all forms of abuse are rife. This being the case, mentors state that they are always conscious of the negative impact of their behaviour on mentees. Mentors suggested that an enforceable code of conduct should be implemented in the mentorship programme.

b. Acting as informal facilitators of learning

The mentoring relationship is driven by the need to learn. Unlike the lecture and the tutorial (and even distance learning), mentoring allows mentees to engage with their mentors on a range of diverse issues in a manner that fundamentally alters their conception of themselves and the world. Science mentors held the view that mentoring is the best context within which to teach problem-solving techniques, since it addresses individual needs and student diversity. There was strong consensus that coaching a mentee allows for the expression of diverse ways of thinking and doing things. Since mentees are unconditionally accepted, they feel comfortable enough to explore the most idiosyncratic of thoughts. This allows for the development of complex cognitive and

social processes where existing thoughts and belief systems are gradually and systematically restructured to agree with accepted and predominant ways of thinking. For example, mentors in the humanities indicated that many students find the area of teaching and understanding theory confusing. Whereas mentees may master the basic concepts for understanding theory, they lack the confidence to express their views, since they feel it is not worth mentioning. Mentees are hesitant to express views, which they believe to be opposing and different. It is in the informal learning context, where safety and intellectual respect are guaranteed, that mentees feel free to engage with complex and opposing issues within the various levels of the discipline. The responses are consistent with the view of Frey & Noller (1983) who emphasise that mentors should possess sufficient skills and knowledge, care about the process of mentoring and have the courage to commit to the affective elements of the relationship.

c. Serving as sounding board for ideas

The discursive and reciprocal nature of mentoring allows for the ongoing and cumulative discussion of ideas, views and thoughts. Mentors are of the opinion that since they are required to be non-judgemental, mentees are able to open up and express their views freely. Since the issues raised are diverse, unpredictable and not necessarily soluble, mentors begin to serve as sounding board for ideas – a process that is essential for learning, growth and development. One mentor stated: *"Mentees should not be told what to do. They must come to you and test their ideas on you. You must guide the discussion, but allow them to make their own decisions. They should be told to make their own decisions."* Another mentor said: *"It is not always easy to have the answers on your fingertips. Mentors sometimes tend to provide mentees with answers. This is fine if they are trying to find a venue. But with other issues they must figure the problem out for themselves."* The feedback confirms the view of La Rose (1995) that mentors serve as a sounding board for ideas. While it is useful for mentees to figure out answers for themselves, the process of resolving the issue at hand should occur in conjunction with the mentor where s/he serves as a sounding board.

d. Serving as catalysts, galvanisers and integrators of multiple environments

As the programme is meant to provide social, personal and academic support simultaneously, mentors are required to fill in the gaps in areas where mentees require them. But in addition to this, mentors hold the view that they are in a position to fast track the process of learning. Instead of a mentee taking one month to adjust to the demands of a new environment with the assistance of the mentor, adjustment can take place much quicker. In order for this accelerated learning to occur, mentors feel that they should be able to "galvanise", persuade or urge mentees into a situation where they begin to take up issues seriously and earnestly. One mentor recalled her first year experience and said that: *"When I failed my first test I was in a state of shock. It was a wake-up call."* By being able to draw on their own experiences, mentors are able to energise and strengthen mentees. Sharing information and knowledge creates a sense of oneness and belonging – both of which reduce the sense of alienation and despair. The visible outcome is one of empowerment.

Mentors were acutely aware of the influence of the environment on students. They described this environment as exciting but also dangerous. Mentors were of the opinion that mentees should be told upfront of the multiple environments which might influence them both negatively or positively. Two issues emerged. One was the need to come to terms with the historical legacy of their previous environment. The second was the need to be aware of the current environmental influences and the need to be able to negotiate through these environments in a meaningful and successful way. One mentor said: *"That since we have been exposed to all facets of the university, we are in the best position to explain to mentees the impact of peer pressure, how to access resources, how to raise funds, where to socialise and who to make friends with. We can also show them how to deal with the university administration because it can be so intimidating. We are also mini lecturers."* Clearly, the issues raised in the ecological model have resonance in this statement. The context-specific person-environment interaction that "emerges as the most likely to exert influence on the course and content of subsequent psychological developments in all spheres" as articulated by (Bronfenbrenner, 1993: 10), is clearly supported in the above quote provided by the mentor. In the interaction between mentor

and mentee there is clear evidence of the progressive mutual accommodation across time between:

> "... an active, growing human being, and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by the relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded (Bronfenbrenner, 1989 : 188)."

Against this background, the positive effects of peer influence cannot be ignored. The statement also indicates that student experience on campus might be fragmented and needs to be reviewed.

e. Giving voice to student concerns

In looking at the first year at university, most mentors felt that first year students are not given much attention. They felt that first year students should be taken far more seriously and that there really isn't an institutionalised forum where the needs of first year students are addressed. However, given that the concerns of their mentees are handled centrally in the student mentorship office, their mentees are given a voice. The concerns and anxieties of mentees are brought to the attention of the relevant officials – from administrators to lecturers. While students are visible on campus, their concerns are not. Given that these concerns are many and varied, affecting almost every single unit on campus, a formal mechanism through which students can have their concerns heard should be established – as a priority. The Students Representative Council (SRC) does not seem to serve this purpose.

4.3.2.5 How do faculty mentors actually practise mentoring?

The practice of mentoring itself is a complex process. Given the dynamics of human interaction and the interplay of various factors (emotional, academic, psychological), it is almost impossible to claim that the mentoring process can be prescribed, determined or formulaic. The purpose behind this question is to analyse and highlight the intricacies of the actual practice in relation to fulfilling the needs of mentees. The responses are

grouped into the following four themes from a to d as they repeatedly emerged in the group discussion.

a. Engaging in a socially complex process with mentees

Mentors held the view that there is diversity in both a homogeneous student population and a heterogeneous student population. Such diversity calls for particular skills when dealing with people. Diversity in a homogeneous student population includes factors such as age, gender, temperament, personality and ability. Diversity in a heterogeneous student population includes factors such as race, gender, age, religion, socio-economic background, cultural background and language background. Given this kind of diversity, the complexities are sharpened and heightened in settings where there is much close and personal interaction.

Skills such as being able to listen attentively, mediate, negotiate and reconcile at both the personal and intellectual level are required. The mentor skills identified as important by mentors are similar to those identified by Parsloe (1992: 71). These include the ability of the mentor to be responsible, to negotiate and to plan alongside other people. In a normal one-hour consultation, a mentor is required to deal with a number of different students, their specific needs and their peculiar talents. The actual practice of mentoring therefore occurs under the influence of social, emotional and cognitive elements interacting in a dialectic way. A mentor said that at first she was very nervous: *"...I did not know what to do. I had students from all backgrounds and I was not able to reach out to them. By the end of the first week I lost many of them. They lost interest. For those who remained, I listened very carefully to what they had to say and tried to give specific help. I realised that at the end of the day it is the mentor who will make the difference."* The practice of mentoring is thus a socially complex human activity where mentors are required to draw on all of their positive energies and make an impression on their mentees.

b. Always trying to ensure a proper match with mentees

In concurrence with Merriam (1983), mentors highlighted the complexities surrounding the matchmaking process. Given the depth of diversity in the student population,

mentors raised the issue of the need to ensure a proper match between mentors and mentees since this would allow mentors the possibilities to fully empower their mentees. Such a match should take into account the need for compatibility at all levels. At the same time it was stated clearly that: *"...Indian students should not mix only with Indian students and African students should not be matched only with African students."* Preferences such as language, cultural and religious background appear to be strong. Some mentees preferred mentors of the same gender. This was related to the issue of female safety.

Mentors indicated that while there are several ways in which mentors could be matched with mentees, mentees should ultimately be given the choice to select whom they would like to work with. The simplest method was to take a class list, divide the class into several groups and then allocate a mentor to a group. However, this was not always effective. Mentors were of the view that prior to allocating mentors to mentees, conditions should be created where mentors and mentees are allowed to mix freely and thereby get acquainted. Even when the match has been finalised, mentees should be allowed to change mentors, should the need arise. All of this should be closely supervised and monitored by the mentorship office – a view supported by Gardiner (1997: 55). At no stage should a match be forced, since it can lead to problems. This view confirms those of Gardiner (1997: 55) who emphasises the need for a balanced outlook in the matching process.

c. Balancing a structured approach versus random acts of kindness

Three mentors were of the view that mentoring should take place if and when the need arises – and that there should not be any particular structure, plan or curriculum. Such spontaneous acts were meaningful, relevant and effective - a view espoused by Premac Associates (1984: 55). In contrast to this view, 12 mentors felt that when dealing with first year students there was a need to work within a structured and facilitated programme where:

- The goals of mentoring are clarified among both mentors and mentees.
- Mentors and mentees are aware of the code of conduct of mentors.

- Responsibilities and roles of mentors and mentees are defined.
- Mentors' and mentees' expectations are taken seriously.
- Checks and balances are in place to ensure that abuse is eliminated.
- The programme is continuously and formatively assessed.

There was consensus that mentoring cannot simply be random acts of kindness. Neither can mentoring be a spontaneous response to student concerns (though spontaneity does have its benefits). The feeling was that the mentoring exercise should be facilitated within clearly defined parameters driven by appropriate institutional policies and specific goals. This view is in concurrence with Murray & Owen (2001: 6) who support the view that the mentoring process functions effectively within a planned, structured and facilitated mentorship programme. In reflecting on their experience, mentors held the view that the entire concept of mentoring must occupy a specific place within the broader formal academic programme.

d. Engaging in a transactional, collaborative and democratic process of learning

It seemed as if within the practice of mentoring the issue of voices, silent voices, silent student voices, is the force that draws mentors and mentees together. Mentors are perceptive. They are quick to see that some of their mentees do not have the confidence to assert themselves, to have their voices heard and to have academia take them seriously. The discursive and reciprocal nature of mentoring allowed for mentors and mentees to negotiate understanding on difficult issues such as acceptable sexual behaviour, ways of dealing with peer pressure and coming to terms with perceived failures and weaknesses. In representing the mentees' concerns, mentors begin to mediate on two levels – at the level of individuals (mentees and mentors) and at the level of the institution (mentees and the institution).

Since all concerns and issues are brought to the attention of the mentorship office (through weekly meetings with mentors, weekly reports and ongoing supervision of the mentoring sessions), student concerns are brought to the attention of the broader university community. The mentorship office, through a process of collaboration with

higher powers, is able to serve as a conduit and mechanism through which student issues are raised, addressed and resolved. The greatest strength of this process is that student concerns are dealt with in a formal and institutionally acceptable manner. Furthermore, all student concerns are addressed in a transparent manner, thereby bringing to the mentoring process a large degree of accountability. Such accountability among mentors, mentees and the institution enhances the democratic nature of the mentoring process.

In her construct of alienation, Mann (2001) refers to the loss of ownership of oneself from the learning process as a result of the unequal distribution of power in the teaching and learning process. The feedback indicates that the mentor through the mentorship office is able to give voice to student concerns. For Holbeche (1995: 96), the establishment of these communication channels reinforces the development of a team culture, which is essential for an organisation aspiring total quality. Further, in the democratic and transactional approach to teaching and learning the mentor serves to reduce feelings of estrangement and alienation from the broader processes impacting on the student.

4.3.2.6 What are your views on the planning, organization and implementation of the Student Mentorship Programme (SMP)?

Given that the mentorship programme is largely a student programme administered by students and that the success of the programme is dependent on the level of planning and organisation, mentors are required to provide an account of their views on whether the programme was well planned and administered. The responses are grouped into the following three themes from a to c as they repeatedly emerged in the group discussion.

a. The need for a well thought out plan – the mentoring curriculum:

On the whole, mentors felt that though the mentorship programme was well organised, there was room for improvement. Mentors identified the following elements as crucial to the success of the implementation of the programme:

- The physical infrastructure must be well resourced and accessible to students.

- The mentorship programme should have a clear and unambiguous plan regarding the nature and purpose of mentoring.
- The mentoring curriculum must provide broad guidelines on what mentoring entails. However, flexibility should be allowed in cases where the curriculum does not address specific concerns.
- The mentoring curriculum should derive directly from student needs in relation to institutional demands. This means that there must be a strong synergy and synchronisation between the activities and needs of students and the all-inclusive demands of the institution.
- There should be a hierarchy of student leaders who take a far more active role in the training and development of mentors, their supervision and their assessment.
- The training of mentors should take place before the programme begins and must continue throughout the year.
- Mentors should be supervised and evaluated in a formative manner.
- There should be less paperwork in terms of report writing and a greater focus on mentor and co-ordinator interaction.
- Mentor co-ordinators normally referred to as faculty co-ordinators should be more experienced and committed. They should at least be full-time employees of the institution.

b. The need for structure and coherence

While mentoring has a particular focus, it links up directly with almost every other activity on campus. In this regard, the activities of the mentoring programme should be structured to deal with all aspects of development in a coherent manner. These views are consistent with those of Murray & Owen (1992). For example, one mentor was adamant that: *"University is not only about studying. It is also about building a whole range of life skills that would allow students to be successful when they start work, it is about teaching mentees to manage their finances properly, it is about helping students see the big picture...we are everything to the mentee".* The functions of the mentor often coincide with those of other units on campus, for example, the personal counselling unit. Therefore, while a mentor may be everything to a mentee, areas of overlap of university

resources should be noted in so far as mentees are also able to access those resources relevant to their specific needs.

c. The need for clear communication and leadership

All mentors felt that there was a lack of communication between mentors and the mentorship office. They felt that some faculty co-ordinators were unable to put their ideas across and this created problems in relation to the execution of their tasks. Two issues related to communication emerged. Firstly, some mentors felt that their faculty co-ordinators communicated with some mentors in a language they did not understand. Secondly, mentors also felt that faculty co-ordinators needed to create and establish a closer and stronger bond with their mentors, since this would allow mentors to better identify with the purpose of the mentoring programme, thereby maintaining allegiance to the goals of both mentoring and the institution.

Mentors identified race, ethnicity, class and gender as some obstacles hindering the successful development of the mentor and co-ordinator relationship. This response suggests that the issue of diversity needs to be addressed in the capacity building workshops. The response also indicates that leadership and management at the middle level require more attention than currently given. Mentors therefore reinforce the view of Ellingson, Haeger & Feldhusen (1986: 5) who support the view that a good mentor programme requires talented leadership, effective co-ordinators, articulate communicators and insightful leaders who will be able to inspire both mentors and mentees. They further claim that since mentoring is a time-consuming process commitment and dedication is required from the leadership.

4.3.2.7 What is your experience of the capacity building workshops for mentors?

Mentors are required to attend a series of capacity building workshops in the course of the year. The workshops are aimed at building the capacity of mentors by equipping them to deal with various tasks. This question aims to establish whether the capacity building workshops fulfilled the learning needs of mentors. The responses are grouped

into the following three themes from a to c as they repeatedly emerged in the group discussion.

a. An essential component of capacity building workshops – relevant topics

Mentors were unanimous in their views that capacity building workshops were essential for all mentors. Such workshops should be held and evaluated regularly, incorporating relevant topics such as setting goals, time-management, note-taking, assertiveness, communication, building confidence, and most importantly, learning how to teach. These views concur with those of McLean (1995: 62) as cited in Megginson & Clutterbuck (1995) that mentoring is not an automatic process. They claim that it is not sufficient to put two people together and expect the relationship to work. Of importance is the need to ensure professional and rigorous preparation for both the mentor and mentee. This would ensure that they enter the process adequately trained and briefed as to what is expected of them and what they may expect to gain from the experience.

b. Interactive and skilled presenters – training the trainer

Given the diversity of student needs, there was the view that presenters and facilitators should be well versed and experienced in the respective fields. Presenters should be varied and sought from outside the institution if and when the need arose. Given the dynamic nature of mentoring, workshops should not be one-way presentations, but interactive and developmental, underpinned by strong elements of collaborative learning.

c. Paving the path to professional development

The greatest benefit of the workshops was that it led directly to the development of mentors as students as well as professionals in their respective fields. In empowering their mentees, mentors felt that they were empowering themselves as well. Mentors felt that the process of engaging with another human being led to deep transformations at the intellectual, personal and social level, both for themselves and their mentees. At the personal level, mentors felt that the 'whole' mentoring experience led to greater self-confidence, assertiveness and communication. Being required to act as role-models, they

felt themselves becoming more self-disciplined, punctual and overtly aware of the impact of their behaviour on others.

Socially, they were able to engage with a variety of people on a range of difficult but interesting issues. Both personally and socially they felt that they gained a deeper understanding of human and developmental issues. The experiences afforded to them by the workshops, in combination with their engagement in the mentoring process, led to far-reaching transformations in their outlook on life and their own value system. The exposure of mentors to the richness of diversity, and their recognition that all people share a common humanity, were lessons that were highly appreciated. These views coincide with the socialist humanist methodology of Freire (1970). In terms of this methodology people do not teach, neither are they self-taught. Rather people teach each other mediated by the world. Ultimately, mentors' attitudes towards most matters took a positive turn.

Mentors held strong views that the success of mentoring depended solely on the mentor. Mentors also felt that the teaching exercise, sharing of ideas and showing someone else the basic tools of the trade were not only intellectually challenging and satisfying, but also intellectually transforming. Mentors felt that this experience prepared them to face the challenges of a profession, which surpassed the qualification. Goodwin & Stevens (1998: 12) support the view that mentoring contributes to professional development. They concur that mentoring is a professionally centered relationship.

Megginson & Clutterbuck (1995: 36) claim that while there is emphasis on what mentors learn there is little analysis of what and how mentors learn from the relationship. The responses received from mentors indicate that the process of learning unfolds at two levels. The first is at the level of participating in capacity building workshops. The second, and more important, is the skills and experience developed out of engaging with the mentee.

4.3.2.8 Did your participation in the mentorship programme as a mentor contribute to your professional development?

This question is linked to the previous question and is aimed at establishing whether participation in the mentorship programme contributed to mentors' professional development. Mentors are also required to indicate how SMP contributed to their own professional development. The responses are grouped into the following two themes, from a to b, as they repeatedly emerged in the group discussion.

a. At the level of the individual

As individuals, mentors felt that the experience of mentoring led to the development and enhancement of specific skills such as tolerance, punctuality, self-discipline, keeping an open mind and appreciating diversity. Mentors believed that they exist as individuals only in terms of a collectivity. Mentors explained this in terms such as "ubuntu" which emphasised that an individual will grow, but will develop even better if helped and assisted by another who is more experienced. It was interesting to see how mentors placed themselves, as individuals, at the centre of a deep and meaningful learning process that would continue well beyond the confines of the university.

b. At the level of the professional

As already indicated in the response to question 4.3.7, mentors felt a sense of fulfilment and development as professionals. The view was that serving as mentors allowed them to develop specific personal, social and professional skills. Personal skills include habits such as self-discipline, punctuality, seriousness, managing their own priorities and time, becoming more sensitive to the needs of others and becoming more responsible socially. With respect to social development, there was unanimous agreement that participation in the mentorship programme afforded them an exposure that they would otherwise have been denied. This exposure included working with people from diverse backgrounds, engaging with different and opposing worldviews and developing the ability to reconcile and come to terms with a multi-ethnical and diverse group of people.

For the researcher, this outcome is exceptionally important in the light of a move towards ensuring that institutions become more sensitive and receptive toward marginal, alienated and diverse student groups. At the professional level, mentors believed that they are better rounded as students, better prepared for the world of work and more committed towards nation building. In the planning sessions involving mentors, the following abilities were developed: the ability to think strategically, operationally and critically. Mentors felt that these skills will be of benefit in their future careers. The responses reflect the views of Gardiner (1997: 52) and Lewis (2000: 54) who concur that the above mentioned benefits accrue to mentors in their development as professionals.

4.3.2.9 Does the Student Mentorship Programme (SMP) help in advancing the goals of the institution?

As a broader social project designed to uplift the educationally under-prepared, SMP is invariably required to advance the goals of the institution. Such goals include the development of an educated citizenry as well as an enlightened workforce. Mentors are first presented with what such goals mean and then required to respond. The responses are grouped into the following two themes from a to b as they repeatedly emerged in the group discussion.

a. Balancing the tension between institutional culture versus student culture

While mentors believed that the student mentorship programme has the potential to improve the pass rate and ensure retention, they were concerned about the impact of negative forces on student behaviour. In particular, they felt that they were unable to deal with the tension between peer pressure and institutional demands. Students, they claimed, have a culture of their own. Problems arise when students (mentees) are over-powered by the behaviour of their peers. Activities such as drinking alcohol, partying, promiscuous sexual behaviour, drugs, procrastination and a lack of interest in studying occur frequently and have the potential to 'destabilise' students. Values underpinning student culture are often in conflict with the value system of the institution. The sad reality is that no interventions are made to try and kerb behaviour patterns of this nature.

The view was that peer mentoring does have the potential to play a useful role in combating this kind of negative behaviour. However, mentors were of the view that they do not necessarily possess the skills to deal with these issues. Critical to this deficiency is their inability to impress upon students the importance of higher education and to sustain their interest. It is the researcher's view that much of this deficiency must be attributed to poor communication skills, lack of maturity and lack of experience – essential mentor attributes as identified by Parsloe (1992), Lewis (2000), Reilly 1982) and Frey & Noller (1993). Mentors were, in the end, of the opinion that institutional culture must, of necessity, respond to the complex needs of students.

b. Redefining learning in the context of passing tests and examinations

There is a sense that academic mentoring is primarily geared towards preparing students for tests and examinations. Though this is not necessarily a bad thing, mentors felt that there should be a greater emphasis on learning for the sake of learning rather than emphasising a mechanistic and rote-from of learning. This view was driven by the recognition that true learning must be a socially and institutionally embedded practice. This view has far-reaching implications for the design and implementation of the formal curriculum, informal curriculum and vicarious learning. Vicarious learning, that is unintended learning, seems to be a key outcome of the mentoring process. This condition can be attributed to the open-ended, questioning and democratic nature of the mentoring process.

4.3.2.9.1 What are the weaknesses, pitfalls and problem areas in the Student Mentorship Programme (SMP), and can they be overcome?

As with any project, SMP has its own weaknesses and pitfalls. Mentors were required to identify these and suggest ways in which they could be overcome. The responses are grouped into the following three themes from a to c as they repeatedly emerged in the group discussion.

a. Mentor commitment

There was unanimous agreement that the success of peer mentoring depended solely on the commitment of the mentor. The lack of commitment and interest shown by some mentors was seen as the main weakness of the programme. Mentees also raised this as a weakness in their mentors. Suggestions made to address this weakness included revising the selection and recruitment criteria, closer supervision of mentors, more enriching workshops and stronger involvement from side of the broader university community. Suggestions were made that the academic value of the programme should be emphasised and attempts made to integrate mentorship with the broader academic programme. Mentors also commented on the possibilities of male mentors abusing their female mentees.

b. Resources

The mentorship programme is staffed by one full-time co-ordinator with four part-time student assistants who assist in the administration of the programme, the training of mentors and the assessment/evaluation of mentor performance. Mentors felt that more resources needed to be invested in the programme and they suggested more full-time staff, a bigger and accessible infrastructure and an increase in remuneration to mentors.

c. A lack of clear leadership and management

Mentors held the view that at times the programme lacked clear and visionary leadership. The lack of clear leadership was illustrated in the faculty co-ordinators' and coordinator's inability to take decisive actions at critical moments. For example, with regard to the issue of training, the coordinator was not always able to give clear and much needed direction in respect of topics to be discussed. Further, the channels of communication between the mentorship office and the mentors were at times blurred and unresponsive.

The above feedback received from mentors clearly illustrates that the peer mentor serves as a mediator between the institution and the mentee. At the micro level of learning and teaching, the peer mentor facilitates a powerful social process that leads to meaningful academic engagement with the intended outcome of bringing together and realigning

institutional imperatives and student needs in a complex context. It can be concluded that the process of mentoring allows mentees and students struggling to succeed in a highly competitive environment to access the inaccessible.

4.4 ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRES ADMINISTERED TO FACULTY CO-ORDINATORS

There are four faculty co-ordinators who assist the co-ordinator of the programme with the management of the mentorship programme. Each co-ordinator is responsible for the training, monitoring and supervision of mentors is his/her faculty. As middle managers, their role in the successful planning, management and implementation of the programme is crucial. Their location in the mentorship programme has already been illustrated in the organogram in Chapter Two, 2.1.4. Given their central position of faculty co-ordinators in the mentorship programme, it is essential to ascertain their views on their experience of the student mentorship programme as it pertains to the following specific aspects of the programme. Each faculty co-ordinator was given a questionnaire (Annexure C) to complete. The questionnaire covered the following areas:

a. the administration of the programme including planning, organisation, implementation, management and supervision;
b. the allocation of resources including infra-structural capacity;
c. the training of the trainer, including capacity building workshops for mentors and supervision of mentors;
d. the mentoring curriculum; and
e. the assessment of the programme and the contribution of mentorship to student academic development.

The questionnaire has been divided into five sections, that is, Section A to Section E. The questions in Section A include the independent variables such as race, gender, nationality, qualification and the number of years employed in the student mentorship programme. The questions in Section B examine the level of effectiveness of the

planning and administration of the student mentorship programme. The questions in Section C relate to the impact of the infra-structural and resource allocation on the effectiveness of the mentorship programme. Section D focuses on the form and content of the mentoring curriculum, as viewed by the faculty co-ordinators. The questions in Section E examine the recommendations forwarded by faculty co-ordinators with regard to how the programme can be improved.

From the four questionnaires handed out (Appendix C), only two questionnaires were returned. While the return rate is low and is not the most desirable outcome, the responses received have nevertheless been acknowledged. Since the feedback received from faculty co-ordinators is useful, their responses have been presented verbatim, followed by a discussion.

4.4.1 Analysis of Section A – Independent Variables

The questions in Section A include the independent variables such as race, gender, nationality, qualification and the number of years employed in the student mentorship programme. These questions will shed light on the level of maturity, experience and level of diversity of faculty coordinators.

4.4.1.1 Indicate which race, gender and nationality you belong to (this is for statistical reasons only).

The mentorship programme has a particular political and academic focus. The programme does have a political bias, since it is meant to address issues of access and equity as defined in current educational policy. Its primary goal is to address the needs of educationally under-prepared students who come from largely the Black (African, Indian and Coloured) population groups. It supports the idea that the leadership and management of the programme must reflect the demographic profile of the student population. The results received from faculty co-ordinators are presented in Table 4.62.

TABLE 4.62

RACE/NATIONALITY AND GENDER BREAKDOWN OF FACULTY CO-ORDINATORS

RACE				NATIONALITY		GENDER	
African	Indian	Coloured	White	South African	Other (Specify)	Male	Female
1	1	-	-	2	-	1	1

The results indicate that faculty co-ordinators are South African, one being Indian and one African. One faculty co-ordinator is male and one is female. Since the response has been so low, these figures do not really add much meaning to the current analysis. They are nevertheless retained, since they indicate the distribution of faculty co-ordinators across race, nationality and gender.

4.4.1.2 Indicate your highest qualification.

The level of qualification serves to indicate the co-ordinators' level of expertise, knowledge and seniority. This is important in the light of the fact that the student mentorship programme operates in a higher education context. The level of qualification held by a faculty co-ordinator sheds light on the level of professionalism and credibility. The results are presented in Table 4.63.

TABLE 4.63

LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION OF FACULTY CO-ORDINATORS

QUALIFICATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Matric	-	-
First degree (Indicate which)	-	-
Honours (Indicate which discipline)	-	-
Masters (Indicate which discipline)	1	50%
PhD	1	50%
TOTAL	**2**	**100%**

Both faculty co-ordinators are post-graduate students, which indicate some level of expertise and seniority. While qualifications cannot be the only determinant on the quality of leadership of the programme, highly qualified personnel do lend some credibility to the programme – the kind of credibility that influences perceptions of

relevant stakeholders, especially academia. Moreso, since this is a student led and student managed programme, external perceptions seem to be that the programme lacks a kind of academic seriousness.

4.4.1.3 Are you currently enrolled for a qualification?

Similar to question 4.4.2, the issue of qualifications indicates the level of expertise in the management of the programme. Being enrolled for a higher qualification points to the seriousness and commitment among student leaders to further develop themselves. The results are presented in Table 4.64 followed by a qualitative response.

TABLE 4.64
ENROLLMENT FOR A QUALIFICATION

OPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	2	100%
No	-	-
Unsure	-	-
TOTAL	**2**	**100%**

Both mentors are enrolled for a further qualification, which indicates a level of academic expertise.

If yes, indicate which qualification you are enrolled for.

One faculty co-ordinator has enrolled for a PhD in Geography and the other has enrolled for a Masters' Degree in Industrial Psychology. The fact that faculty co-ordinators, seen as student leaders, are pursuing higher levels of study only serves to encourage and inspire the students they lead. In this case, students will include mentors and mentees. The quest for self-improvement sends a clear message of academic seriousness and academic commitment – qualities that ease the process of leading and managing other students.

4.4.1.4 How long have you been employed as faculty co-ordinator?

This question aims to verify the number of years faculty co-ordinators have been employed in the mentorship programme and the experience they bring to the programme. The results are presented in Table 4.65.

TABLE 4.65

NUMBER OF YEARS FACULTY CO-ORDINATORS HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED IN THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

NUMBER OF YEARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	-	-
2	-	-
3	-	-
4	1	50%
4+	1	50%
TOTAL	**2**	**100%**

The two faculty co-ordinators have 8 years of mentoring and management experience between them. The figures indicate that faculty co-ordinators have participated in the programme since its inception, have been part of the growth and development of the programme and have witnessed both the positive and negative aspects of the programme. The issue that must be appreciated and acknowledged is that faculty coordinators have progressed from peer mentors to faculty coordinators garnering, along the way, a wealth of experience that encompasses institutional and student needs, skills and knowledge. As middle managers, this wealth of experience can only serve the best interests of both the institution and the students.

4.4.2 Analysis of Section B – Administration, Planning, Organisation and Management

The success of any programme or project depends on the quality of its administration, which includes the following elements: planning, organisation, management, leadership,

supervision, control and authority. The following questions aim to assess the level of effectiveness of the different levels of administration of the programme.

An institutional and university-wide programme invariably requires detailed planning and organisation if goals are to be realised effectively. Meticulous planning and organisation clearly emanates from the following elements:

- strong and visionary leadership;
- detailed macro and micro management; and
- supervision and control of the activities undertaken in the programme.

The student mentorship programme is a new project – one that is complex and diverse. The programme therefore requires much direction and focus. The aim of questions 4.4.2.1, 4.4.2.2, 4.4.2.3 and 4.4.2.4 is to assess the success of the elements identified above, as it pertains to the implementation of the student mentorship programme.

Faculty co-ordinators are required to read through the definitions provided in each question and answer the questions from 4.4.2.1 to 4.4.2.4. These questions are open-ended and qualitative in nature. These questions aim to elicit in-depth, wide and diverse feedback.

4.4.2.1 Planning can be regarded as the creation of a set of decisions for future action, which are directed at the optimum realisation of objectives (Badenhorst, 1992: 68). After reading the definition on planning provided above, describe the effectiveness of the planning of the Student Mentorship Programme.

Due acknowledgement must be given to the fact that the Student Mentorship Programme needs of both mentors and mentees are diverse, complex and demanding. In the feedback received from mentees, it was clear that mentoring could not be reduced to a random act of kindness. It must be acknowledged and appreciated that there is a need to plan the detail of a facilitated structured approach to mentoring, so that:

- The mentoring process has clearly defined goals.
- The conditions within which the process unfolds are conducive to realising the objectives of mentoring.
- The effectiveness of the programme can be measured.

Against this context, clear and meticulous planning is essential.

The verbatim responses of each of the respondents are provided below, followed by a discussion.

Respondent 1

A lot of planning has been done for the past four years but nothing much has been implemented. With the merger in place, the future of mentorship is not known. The change of line managers is also another setback for the implementation of the plans. For instance, for 2003 alone, there were three different line managers.

Respondent 2

The planning of the programme is conducted in a meticulous manner, both strategically and operationally. Strategically, it is done at committee level on a weekly basis. Operationally, it is established at committee level and then tasked to various people to achieve the objectives set out. The progress and feedback of the implementation of such plans are discussed at weekly meetings. In as much as the planning is quite good, in my opinion much more can be achieved if the staff of the SMP were full time and not student assistants who work for 5 hours a day. To create staff morale and a sense of ownership of the programme, the powers that be should consider the intellectual capital at their disposal and retain this. Also, the implementation of most strategic plans is limited by the financial and human resource constraints of the programme.

Discussion of responses

Clear and systematic planning is a critical factor determining the success of the programme. It appears as if the planning of the programme was effective. The imminent merger of the institutions, the University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal

into the new merged institution called the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, clearly has implications for the current structure and operations of the Student Mentorship Programme. The fear surrounding the future existence of the programme must be taken seriously, given the valuable role it plays in the lives of many students. Furthermore, those involved in the development and establishment of the programme have invested much time, energy and ideas into the programme. It is in the interest of the institution (and students) that the experience of these student leaders be recognised and maintained.

Faculty co-ordinators are really senior student leaders. The responses from faculty co-ordinators indicate a level of maturity, depth, commitment and seriousness. The ability of student leaders to plan strategically and operationally clearly sends a message that student leaders constitute an asset to the broader university community as planners and facilitators of learning, informal custodians of first year students and leaders of student development. The weekly meetings referred to do not give much detail as to the content of these discussions but one can only imagine the rich detail of the discussions taking place, given that every single student issue is brought to the table for discussion on a weekly basis. It is also in the interest of the broader university community that the content of the discussion is fed back to them.

4.4.2.2 Organisation entails the manner in which tasks are to be divided; which and how many posts are to be created; the relationship between the persons and the posts; and the creation of the channels of communication between the various persons and posts (Badenhorst, 1992: 68). After reading the definition on organisation provided above, describe the effectiveness of the organisation of the Student Mentorship Programme.

The Student Mentorship Programme is required to reach out to first year students. A key focus of the programme is to address the challenges faced by first year students. There are thousands of such students on campus. The manner in which students (the intended target) receive the mentorship programme, will depend on the following elements:

a. Effectiveness of the level of organisation of the programme;

b. Determining the number of mentors to be employed;

c. Based on the number of mentors to be employed, decisions must be made about the recruitment, selection and employment of mentors. Employment requires the development of clear policy guidelines on the criteria for selection of mentors, the selection of an interview committee, the selection of mentors and the subsequent endorsing of an employment contract. The employment contract is essential, since it must clearly and definitively outline mentors' job description, the number of hours they are required to work, expectations of their conduct in terms of relating to mentees, attending capacity building workshops, the supervision of mentors and their evaluation by faculty co-ordinators.

d. The lines of accountability between mentees, mentors, faculty co-ordinators and the student mentorship office must be clear, so as to avoid confusion.

e. The time, venue and content of the capacity building workshops for mentors must be clearly outlined. Mentors need to be informed of the consequences for non-attendance. The sessions must also be monitored and evaluated.

f. The successful matching of mentors to mentees depends on the ability of faculty co-ordinators to liase with the members of the faculty and other university officials, to assess the needs of both mentors and mentees and to organise consultation and meetings.

The above clearly indicates the extent and depth of the level of organisation required in order to ensure the smooth functioning of the programme. The verbatim responses of each of the respondents are provided below, followed by a discussion.

Respondent 1

The tasks are clearly defined, but not all stakeholders in the programme are practically adhering to their stipulated tasks. Some stakeholders are not competent enough to perform their duties. There are also cases where the channels of communication are not followed. For example, some mentors do not report their concerns to the immediate

supervisors and instead they prefer to come directly to the SMP co-ordinator, probably because they are friends with him.

Respondent 2

Again, considering the limited resources of the programme the organisation is as good as can be expected. As an ideal, personally it is my belief that this can be improved. The lack of human resources has again been the major factor in negating the achievement of idealistic standards. However, tasks have been divided in a manner that is consistent with the objectives of the SMP, and has thus far achieved the desired results.

Discussion of responses

The issue of mentor commitment emerges again. The view is that while tasks are clearly defined and allocated, mentors are not interested, committed or capable of executing these tasks. This has negative implications for the recruitment and selection of mentors and the monitoring of mentoring activities. Channels of communication do not appear to be clear and effective. In this regard, capacity building workshops need to focus on building communication as central to successful mentoring. There also seems to be a need for additional human resources.

4.4.2.3 Management in the class is regarded as those managerial activities of the teacher that not only make effective instruction and learning in the classroom possible, but that can also take place concurrently with the instruction (Badenhorst, 1992: 71). After reading this definition on management provided above, describe the effectiveness of the management of mentors and mentees in the Student Mentorship Programme.

The process of mentoring occurs in a central consultation venue called J-045, that is, mentors consult with their mentees in a common venue. These mentoring sessions are supervised and monitored by faculty co-ordinators. The rationale behind supervising mentoring is to ensure that:

a. quality mentoring is taking place;
b. mentees' needs are addressed;
c. mentors are sufficiently equipped with relevant skills and knowledge to deal with mentees' needs;
d. mentors are available and accessible to mentees;
e. mentors do not abuse their position of power over their mentees; and
f. possible weaknesses are identified and addressed systematically and timeously.

The verbatim responses of each of the respondents are provided below, followed by a discussion.

Respondent 1

Some members of the SMP management committee do not work on professional principles and ethics. This makes work difficult for those individuals who work effectively. I am ready to give details verbally, if you do not mind.

Respondent 2

The management of the mentors is excellent, operationally the SMP supervisors supervise them, and they also hold meetings with these supervisors. They have access to the management of the SMP via meetings with the operational co-ordinator and voice any of their concerns and indicate areas for improvement for the programme. Many of their concerns have provided impetus into the development of policies and procedures.

Discussion of responses

Mentors have already acknowledged that the success of mentoring depends solely on mentors themselves. Hence, the impact of their activities on mentees must be closely monitored and managed. The one view indicates that the committee that manages and monitors mentors operates unprofessionally and unethically. The other view is that the management of mentors has been excellent, democratic and open which has led to the constructive development of the programme. These conflicting views indicate that the management of the programme and the supervision of mentoring is not only challenging

but also riddled with inter-personal issues relating to communication, conduct of behaviour and an understanding of what supervision and management entails. Perhaps, there is a need for the training of faculty co-ordinators in the area of management and leadership.

4.4.2.4 Leadership is defined as planned by the teacher (faculty co-ordinators) to encourage, inspire and motivate the pupils (Badenhorst, 1992: 68). After reading the definition on leadership provided above, describe the effectiveness of leadership within the Student Mentorship Programme.

The Student Mentorship Programme at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal was inspired by a paper on the benefits of peer mentoring presented by Mr. Mandla Ndaba, a member of the Students' Representative Council (SRC) to the then Vice-Chancellor, Professor M Ramashala. The Vice-Chancellor supported the idea and the programme was established. Setting up the programme was challenging, since the concept was new – to some it was inconceivable that such a programme could be effective. The crucial element required to drive and build the programme was visionary leadership – the kind of leadership that would be able to communicate the idea to all stakeholders and ensure that those who are tasked with the responsibility of delivery are inspired and encouraged enough to do so.

The verbatim responses of each of the respondents are provided below, followed by a discussion.

Respondent 1

Mentors are highly motivated and on several occasions they are commended for the good work being done. The highlight is at the closing ceremony where the best mentors are given certificates and trophies. The SMP management staff is not really motivated. Instead they are overworked and their hard work is not recognised and rewarded at all.

Respondent 2

One of the goals of the programme is to create leaders out of these mentors. This objective has been extremely successful, as many of the past mentors have attained coveted positions in industry. We would not be able to create these leaders if we were not leaders ourselves. The training workshops provided aids this process very well, mentors who are otherwise reserved tend to take the debate head on. These changes become visible as the year goes by. In order to actually rally mentors to achieve goals, it is the charisma of the co-ordinators that motivate mentors to transcend their normal efforts.

Discussion of responses

The view is that co-ordinators and mentors have created leaders out of mentors and mentees as evidenced by the senior position mentors subsequently occupy in industry. The charismatic type of leadership seems to be useful in motivating mentors. An evident dissatisfaction among faculty co-ordinators is the lack of seriousness and attention given to them by senior officials of the university. In direct contrast to this, the mentorship office has recognised and affirmed the positive role played by mentors, which in turn has led to highly motivated and committed mentors. It also appears that capacity-building workshops for mentors has led to the gradual growth of mentors' abilities and performance.

4.4.3 Analysis of Section C – Infra-Structure and Resource Allocation

There are two factors that contribute to the success of a programme. One is the infrastructure provided. In other words, are the conditions conducive to the creation of meaningful teaching and learning experiences required for success? The other is the quality and quantity of resources provided, which again, determine the quality of the teaching and learning experience. The issue of infrastructure and resources are determining factors in the successful implementation of the programme. Question 4.4.3.1 aims to test whether these aims were achieved adequately.

4.4.3.1 Do you believe that the programme is sufficiently resourced to meet the goals of the Student Mentorship Programme?

Faculty co-ordinators are required to indicate an option, which is either Yes, No or Other. The results are presented in Table 4.66, followed by a discussion.

TABLE 4.66
PERCEPTION ON THE RESOURCE ALLOCATION OF THE PROGRAMME

OPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	-	-
No	2	100%
Unsure	-	-
TOTAL	**2**	**100%**

Both faculty co-ordinators hold the view that the peer mentor programme is not sufficiently resourced. In the light of previous responses, this view is not surprising. It would appear that there needs to be a greater investment in the mentorship programme in terms of funds, resources and commitment from all stakeholders.

4.4.4 Analysis of Section D – Evaluation of the Mentoring Curriculum

Question 4.4.4.1 focuses on the content and form of the mentoring curriculum. The responses received from mentees in question 4.4.4.1 clearly point to the significance of a curriculum for mentoring. The results indicate that successful mentoring requires structure and focus to the content and form of mentoring, especially as it pertains to under-graduate students. Question 4.4.4.1 aims to assess the effectiveness of the mentoring curriculum in meeting the needs of students from the perspective of faculty co-ordinators. Faculty co-ordinators are required to read through the definition of a curriculum and then answer question 4.4.4.1. The results are presented in Table 4.67, followed by a discussion.

4.4.4.1 Curriculum is defined as 'the set of broad inter-related decisions about what is taught that characterise the general framework from within which teaching (mentoring) is planned and learning takes place' (Miller, 1987:6). After reading the above definition, indicate the level of effectiveness of the mentoring curriculum in meeting the needs of first-year students.

TABLE 4.67

LEVEL OF EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MENTORING CURRICULUM IN MEEETING THE NEEDS OF FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

LEVEL OF EFFECTIVENESS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Very Effective	-	-
Effective	2	100%
Average	-	-
Ineffective	-	-
Very Ineffective	-	-
TOTAL	**2**	**100%**

Both faculty co-ordinators have indicated that the impact of the mentoring curriculum in meeting the needs of first year students has been effective. The results indicate that the content of the mentoring process was useful, beneficial and relevant. In motivating their responses, faculty co-ordinators have provided the following verbatim responses. These responses are followed by a discussion.

Respondent 1

The needs of first-entry students range from academic, social to personal. The SMP is effective in satisfying the needs of first-entry students in that it covers all the 3 areas mentioned earlier on. Most of the mentors are academically competent and they are dedicated to their task of helping first-entry students. The SMP management team also sees to it that first-entry students get the help they need from the mentors. This is achieved through close monitoring and supervision of mentors as well as training. However, better training needs to be organised for mentors in order to do their work effectively.

Respondent 2

Mentorship is a process, therefore with regard to any sort of curriculum, there are various interventions that mentors are trained and urged to relay to their mentees. Initially, first entry students grapple with basic issues such as timetables and lecture venues. However, as the year goes on their issues become more academic. Therefore, mentorship is designed to cater for the needs of the first entry student rather than the implementation of a specific curriculum.

Discussion of responses

There is agreement that the mentoring curriculum was effective. The consistent reference to training workshops suggests that peer mentoring cannot unfold outside of a well-developed and well-planned capacity building workshops. There is a definite acknowledgement that such workshops play a pivotal role in the successful execution of mentors' duties. The issue of mentor accountability is raised with reference to the monitoring and supervision of mentors' activities. With regard to the curriculum, one view is that a specific curriculum is not essential, and the other is that a mentoring curriculum will only serve to integrate the three levels of mentoring – personal, social and academic – successfully. The former view refers to mentoring as a process. While this may be the case, such a process unfolds within a defined curriculum. However, what may need to be acknowledged, is that the curriculum itself must be flexible and responsive to student needs.

4.4.5 Analysis of Section E – Recommendations for the Future

The question in Section E, 4.4.5.1 focuses on the recommendation for the future development and improvement of the mentorship programme. As already indicated in question 4.4.4.1, faculty co-ordinators have a number of years of experience in the mentorship programme. Further, the responses received from mentors and mentees indicate that there are gaps, weaknesses and shortcomings in the mentorship programme. The following question is designed to establish the specific and general recommendations that would assist in the future development and improvement of the programme.

4.4.5.1 What recommendations do you have for the future development and improvement of the programme?

The responses provided by faculty co-ordinators are presented verbatim and followed by a discussion.

Respondent 1

- *There is a need to extend the programme to all campuses of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal.*
- *Resources: in terms of funding, infrastructure as well as manpower on a full time and/or permanent basis.*
- *Mentoring should be discipline specific since most of the mentoring activities are around academic issues.*
- *A lot of data have been gathered on mentoring. It will be imperative if articles are published to give more light on what the programme entails.*
- *Better training should be organised in order to equip the mentors as well as the supervisors with the necessary skills.*

Respondent 2

If the programme is to succeed, there needs to be the expenditure of resources, especially human resources. Having only a single full time staff member for a university-wide programme such as this one, is not acceptable. This is a great programme, my experience is evidence to the many students who have passed through its corridors to become leaders and innovative thinkers. This programme should be a national strategy for student support. It also makes a tangible difference to the pass rate of students, there is no evidence to verify this, but intuitively I personally don't need any. This informal learning process works amazingly well, and should be explored as an effective track and trace system, where each and every first-entry student can be successfully managed to ensure his or her academic success. The possibilities are endless, but the real work is not in conceptualisation but practical implementation.

Discussion of responses

The comment that the peer mentor programme should extend to all campuses and become a national strategy for student support is incisive and deep. This response is not surprising, given the ability of the programme to simultaneously address the personal, social and academic needs of first year students within the context of multiple and changing environments. As a form of an intervention strategy for academically under-prepared first year students, its greatest benefit seems to reside in its ability to improve academic performance and the intended outcome of improving the pass rate. The emphasis on informal learning suggests that the learning opportunities afforded outside of the confines of the classroom cannot be ignored. It is possible that informal learning carries equal if not greater weight than formal learning. In this regard, the role of mentors as informal facilitators of learning must be enhanced and maintained. However, such a process is contingent on thorough and continuous training, supervision, monitoring and assessment of mentors. Informal learning as occurring in the mentoring process should be intertwined with formal learning processes and embedded within formally defined institutional processes such as lectures, tutorials and texts.

The suggestion that the peer mentor programme can lend itself to 'tracking and tracing' student performance should be explored further. The data on the practical implementation of the programme should be brought out into the open for interested people to access. However, the last two suggestions would require a bigger investment in resources in terms of person-power, time and funds. Notwithstanding these limitations, the programme appears to have achieved much more than is evident. The challenge, it appears, lies in the practical implementation of the programme and its continued success.

In the researcher's view, the area of the management of a peer mentor programme by student leaders has been overlooked. Whereas the literature study focuses on the impact of mentoring on both mentors and mentees, the essential component of the leadership and the management of the programme is overlooked. The feedback received from the faculty co-ordinators, mentors and mentees attest to this view. According to Ellingson, Haeger & Feldhusen (1986: 5) there is the need for talented leadership, effective co-

ordinators, articulate communicators and insightful leaders. There are two issues that are critical to the role of those who manage the programme. One is empowering programme managers to deal with the complexity of administering the programme. The other is ensuring that such managers are accountable for the delivery of the programme. Competent leadership and management are likely to lead to the success of the programme. Lewis (2000: 32) supports the view that competence in management and in working with managers in organisations is essential. Such competence ensures the managers' credibility among senior members of the organisation. Parlsoe (1992) is of the view that when such credibility is established, managers are better able to assist their mentors in accessing resources and information.

4.5 A COMPARITIVE ANALYSIS OF THE FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM MENTEES, MENTORS AND FACULTY CO-ORDINATORS

The qualitative feedback received from the focus group interviews and the quantitative feedback received from mentees indicates that one set of responses has been re-inforced by another. Simply stated, the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods has served to enhance the validity of the results. Feedback received from mentees and mentors indicate that, on the whole, they experienced the process of mentoring positively.

The positive impact that mentoring has had on students pertain to the following areas:

a. Mentoring, a socially complex process, facilitated and eased the transition from school to university.
b. Experiences of disengagement and isolation, most strongly felt in the first few weeks at university, were reduced through the process of mentoring.
c. The greater part of mentoring led to successful academic development.
d. Academic mentoring is underpinned by successful personal and social mentoring.
e. Negative environmental influences were counteracted through successful mentoring.

f. Historical and individual shortcomings were successfully addressed through the peer mentor programme.
g. Mentors benefited from the programme in terms of developing personal skills and building capacity.
h. Mentor attributes such as being caring, helpful, friendly and approachability ranked among the highest.
i. Issues of diversity can be addressed through the process of peer mentoring.
j. The peer mentor programme has the potential to increase student success and possibly retention.

The negative aspects pertain to the following:

a. The inability of mentors to commit to the programme.
b. The inability of mentors to be accessible to their mentors.
c. The inability of mentors to display and communicate the true meaning of mentoring.
d. Poor leadership, in the form of a lack of vision and lack of communication skills displayed by faculty co-ordinators.
e. Poor organisational and planning skills of student leaders.
f. The lack of investment in the programme in terms of resources, funding and human investment.
g. The area of developing student leadership within the programme requires much attention.
h. Greater attention needs to be paid to the management and administration of the programme.

The greater benefit of the study to an understanding of the assessment of intervention programmes is that it supports the view that greater attention needs to be paid to the processes informing how and why students assimilate and internalise an environment of higher learning. In short, qualitative assessment practices need to enhance and support quantitative processes in the assessment of human developmental processes.

From both the qualitative and quantitative feedback received from the three groups of participants, it is evident that the views are not divergent. On the contrary, the use of both the qualitative and quantitative methods serve to reinforce the reliability and validity of the data.

4.6 SUMMARY

This study has been challenging at many levels. It is a culmination of many years of work in academic development. As a tutor in academic development in the Faculty of Arts in the early 1990s, the researcher was fortunate enough to experience some of the difficulties faced by students on a first-hand basis. As co-ordinator of the university-wide peer mentor programme, the researcher's understanding of student difficulties took on a different meaning, leading to a drastic change in the researcher's perspective of what defines a university student. The current study is a massive attempt to consolidate and solidify the researcher's prior experience of student academic development. For the first time, the researcher has empirically tested the commonly held beliefs, assumptions, theories and suppositions around peer facilitated mentoring.

The researcher's perceptions on the possible causes of student failure and attrition have been tried and tested several times over. In aiming to understand the perceptions around the first year student experience – in particular the alienated form of experience – the researcher generated a particular hypothesis that categorically stated that the first year of experience of higher education is essentially alienating for first generation students from developing societies. A possible interventionist strategy in the form of the peer mentor programme holds out the hope that alienated students can be assisted by instilling in them positive personal, social and academic skills.

The greatest challenge in the current study has been one of selecting the appropriate method/s in collecting data and the selecting the kind of questions that need to be asked. With regard to the design of the questionnaire, questions had to be carefully designed in

order to understand the 'alienated' experience of the student and the impact of peer mentoring on students. In comparison to the questionnaire, the focus group interview allowed for a deeper and far more engaging discussion on relevant issues. There was much space for further clarification of ideas, concepts and meanings. The challenges outlined in Chapter Three relating to language, race, class and gender did not present severe obstacles, since most mentors were comfortable speaking in English and were at ease in a racially and gender mixed group. However, the greatest challenge was in getting to ask the kinds of questions that would elicit the real lived experience of higher education and peer mentoring.

The feedback received from mentees indicate that the first year experience cannot be seen as a homogeneous, monolithic experience of alienation, but that there are degrees of alienation and engagement – all of which are related to aspects such as time and context, and are process and chronologically bound. The ecological model of Uri Bronfenbrenner (1993) has been especially useful in shedding light on the multiple influences of the environment on student academic development and the role of the peer mentor programme in addressing these influences. There has been overwhelming consensus from mentees that peer mentoring has the potential to seriously address their personal, social and academic needs in the period of transition from school to university and thereafter. These views have been supported and corroborated by mentors who provided deep, incisive and analytical views on their role as peer mentors. Notwithstanding some of the problems and pitfalls – most of which can be addressed – peer mentoring appears to provide a much-needed solution to the challenges facing both students and the institution within contemporary higher education.

CHAPTER FIVE

SYNTHESIS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Five is the final and concluding chapter, providing a synthesis of the current study, presenting conclusions that were derived from the study, and offering an interpretation of the results received from mentors, mentees and faculty co-ordinators. The chapter concludes with recommendations on how peer facilitated mentoring between first year, first generation students in higher education in a developing society can be implemented as an intervening strategy addressing both student concerns and institutional imperatives.

In his "person-process-context-time" model of human development, Bronfenbrenner (1993: 10) postulates two axioms underlying human development: that "development is an evolving function of person-environment interaction" and "that ultimately this interaction must take place in the immediate, face-to-face setting in which the person exists". Implicit in this axiom, is the inescapable influence of the environment and multiple environments on the course of human development, as well as on the human need to learn, develop and grow in the context of close inter-personal human relationships. To extend this view further and give it even deeper meaning, it is accepted that a person grows and matures in tandem with the changes occurring in his/her or environment, and that a positive growth is determined by the close and careful guidance and support of another human being. The need and intensity for such close guidance, support and teaching increase in cases where students have been deprived of the very

experiences that would prepare them for the challenges of higher education or when students begin to experience a sense of estrangement.

Thus far, the concept that comes closest to describing and ensuring that such a process unfolds, is the concept of peer facilitated mentoring – defined by Megginson and Clutterbuck (1997: 13) as "...help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking." Assimilating and internalising the core of higher education – its values, its culture, its ideas, its theories and its peculiar discourse – requires that a student possesses the requisite cognitive, personal and social skills to access the core issues of higher education.

In her last construct on alienation referred to as "leave me alone" as a form of self preservation, Mann (2001) theorises that the symbolic realm, in this case the institution, is potentially threatening and therefore does not afford closure. The result is that students begin to shy away from the institution and engage with it from a distance – as if they are estranged from it. Yet, the results on the impact of peer mentoring indicates that since peer mentoring plays a consolidative role it has the potential to bring to closure a range of difficult and complex issues for both the student and the institution. The transition from the periphery to the centre, and the migration from being powerless to owning the process of learning, rest on the level of success a student accomplishes in various areas. These include the following: making the kinds of transitions required for building the cognitive structure, assimilating and creating knowledge, understanding the nature of work and in being able to make significant transformations in the quality of the thinking process. The feedback received from mentors and mentees indicates that peer facilitated mentoring makes a useful contribution to changes in knowledge, work and thinking, in a manner that allows mentees to negotiate the rocky terrain of higher education.

The following discussion provides an overview of background chapters, assesses the hypotheses, presents conclusions and provides recommendations on the potential role of peer facilitated mentoring in higher education.

5.2 AN OVERVIEW OF BACKGROUND CHAPTERS

Chapter One outlined the problem statement in relation to the nature of student experience of higher education and the impact of peer facilitated mentoring on student development, with specific reference to the first year, first generation and academically under-prepared student. The current study was based on the hypotheses that higher education is essentially an alienating experience for first generation and first year students, and that peer facilitated mentoring in the form of academic, social and personal mentoring contributes towards specific areas of development.

The above hypotheses were followed by a presentation on the aims of the study. In order to focus the research, the multiple definitions of mentoring were synthesised in order to provide a comprehensive working definition of peer facilitated mentoring in higher education in 1.6. The hypotheses, aims of the study and the comprehensive working definition of peer facilitated mentoring in higher education form the basis upon which the motivation and rationale for the study was presented. The rationale and motivation advance arguments for the need for such a study. A brief review of related literature in the area of student experience of higher education and the potential role of peer facilitated mentoring serving to give context, meaning, purpose and direction to the current study, were presented. Against this review of literature and the aims of the study, the parameters, strengths and weaknesses of the current study were outlined. Chapter One concluded with a list of definitions utilised in the current and subsequent chapters.

Chapter Two provided an extensive account of peer facilitated mentoring in higher education. The chapter began with a critical analysis of the National Plan on the Restructuring of Higher Education in South Africa, with reference to socio-economic challenges, its impact on the restructuring of higher education, and the subsequent effects of such changes on students' personal, social and academic development. Against this background, students' experience of higher education was presented in relation to their subjective, lived and personal experiences framed by the discourse of higher education as being alienating. The concept of higher education as an alienated experience for first

year, first generation students in a developing society, was explained within the theoretical framework espoused by Mann (2001). The theoretical framework on alienation places emphasis on the socio-cultural context, the primacy of discourse, the student as outsider (knowledge, power and insight), the teaching and learning process, the loss of ownership of the learning process and alienation as a strategy for self-preservation. A case is made out that student experience of higher education can indeed be one of alienation, and that an intervening strategy such as peer facilitated mentoring can serve to counter some of these negative experiences.

The process of peer facilitated mentoring is viewed as a democratic and collaborative response to challenges in teaching and learning in higher education. Mentoring is being widely used in higher education the world over, as a means to address student needs and institutional goals. Peer facilitated mentoring is gradually being introduced into South African higher education, especially at the first year level. The entire gamut of the first year experience of higher education was explored with a conclusion on some of the principles that inform the first year experience. Inherent in these principles, is the common element of co-operative and collaborative learning that must underpin the process of mentoring. In this regard the co-operative model was presented as the basis upon which peer mentoring must unfold. Upon this model, the macro and micro model of mentoring were viewed as providing both the conceptual and operational framework within which a peer mentoring programme could be implemented. A detailed discussion was then presented on the following elements: the processes and phases of mentoring, the selection and recruitment of mentors, the selection and recruitment of mentees, the matching of mentors to mentees, benefits of the programmes and the possible weaknesses and drawbacks of the programme. The chapter concluded with a discussion on the significance of evaluating the programme and the manner in which it could be conducted.

Chapter Three provided an in-depth account of the research design, as regards the evaluation of the programme. Mentors, mentees and faculty co-ordinators formed part of the evaluation process. Questionnaires were implemented to both mentees and faculty co-ordinators. Focus group interviews were conducted with mentors. The sampling

frame, selection of questions, analysis of feedback, interpretation of results, and the validity and reliability of results were explained and motivated in the discussion.

Chapter Four presented in-depth analyses and interpretations of the feedback received from mentees, mentors and faculty co-ordinators. The analyses included both quantitative and qualitative analyses and thematic interpretations. The analyses generated a range of issues that shed light on the level to which the hypothesis could be validated, and on the conclusions that could be drawn. The conclusions are presented in 5.3. The recommendations are presented in 5.4.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

The current study is based on the following hypotheses:

a. Higher education is essentially an alienating experience for first generation and first year students.

b. Current systems of teaching and learning are unable to deal effectively with such experiences of disengagement and alienation.

c. Peer facilitated mentoring in the form of academic, social and personal mentoring contributes towards the following areas of development:
   - alleviating the first year student's experience of alienation at different levels of institutional life within the higher education system;
   - contributing towards enhancing a student's academic, social and personal skills;
   - invariably increasing student success and retention at the first year level;
   - contributing toward the professional development of mentors; and
   - contributing toward strengthening the organisational effectiveness of the institution.

The feedback received from mentors and mentees was both insightful and perceptive. The level of analysis, critique and self-reflective thought demonstrated by mentors and mentees illustrated a degree of maturity that allowed the researcher to attach a great deal of credibility to their views. Given that the concept of alienation and peer mentoring and its associated meanings are difficult to operationalise and measure, the study depended largely on the content of the qualitative feedback linked to the quantitative results. The degree of validity of the hypotheses and the conclusions derived were presented in terms of the broader systemic influences inherent in the higher education system, as presented in Figure 5.1.

5.3.1 The Impact of the Peer Mentor Programme on the Mentee and Mentor

There is conclusive evidence that the peer mentor programme benefited mentees, mentors and the institution in several ways – by consolidating the process of learning and by providing closure to complex issues. The evidence also suggests that conclusions on the impact of the programme must be guided by both the quantitative responses received. The impact of the programme on the individuals involved is described as follows:

a. There was unanimous agreement, from among both mentors and mentees that mentees benefited from the programme during the following phases: pre-registration orientation, orientation, post orientation and post registration. The impact of mentoring was greatest at the orientation phase in terms of adaptation and adjustment.

b. The greater benefit of mentoring was in the area of academic mentoring as reflected in its perceived level of importance (76%) in comparison with personal mentoring and social mentoring. In this regard, mentees supported this view by claiming that mentors explain, teach, clarify, show ways of problem solving and assist in the preparation for tests and exams.

c. Mentees also supported the view that mentoring supports their psychosocial development. The five most important things they learnt from the programme include: adaptation to the university, communication and self-confidence, coping academically, accessing resources and time-management.

d. While mentees have indicated that they benefited from the programme, they also identified five weaknesses. These include: a lack of understanding of mentoring among mentors, logistical issues such as location of the central consultation venue, consultation times, the duration of mentoring and the lack of mentor commitment to the programme.

e. Mentees identified factors such as friendliness, communication and kindness as the three best qualities manifested by the mentor.

f. Mentees identified factors such as lack of punctuality, lack of confidence and inability to communicate as the three worst qualities manifested by the mentor.

g. Mentors were of the view that the peer mentor programme contributed to their development as individuals and as professionals way beyond their expectations.

5.3.2 Peer Facilitated Mentoring in the Context of Broader Systemic Influences

On the basis of the results obtained, it can be concluded that the first year experience of higher education is neither alienating nor engaging for the first year student, and that student experience falls somewhere in the continuum between alienation and engagement. The level of alienating or engaging experiences depends on the nature and context operational at particular moments. At best the first year experience can be said to be a partially broken fragmented experience and that peer facilitated mentoring has the potential to play a mediating and powerful role in ensuring that the needs of students are addressed and that the goals of the institution are met. In this regard, peer mentoring does contribute towards developing a student's academic and cognitive skills, personal

attributes and social skills. Peer mentoring holds out the possibility that success and retention can be ensured. The process of mediating, negotiating and transacting, as it unfolds in the context of peer mentoring in higher education, clearly leads to the professional development of mentors. Peer mentoring also strengthens the effectiveness of the institution. The conclusions are presented in terms of Figure 5.1:

FIGURE 5.1

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MACRO-MICRO ENVIRONMENTS OF THE INSTITUTION AND THE MACRO-MICRO ENVIRONMENTS OF THE STUDENT

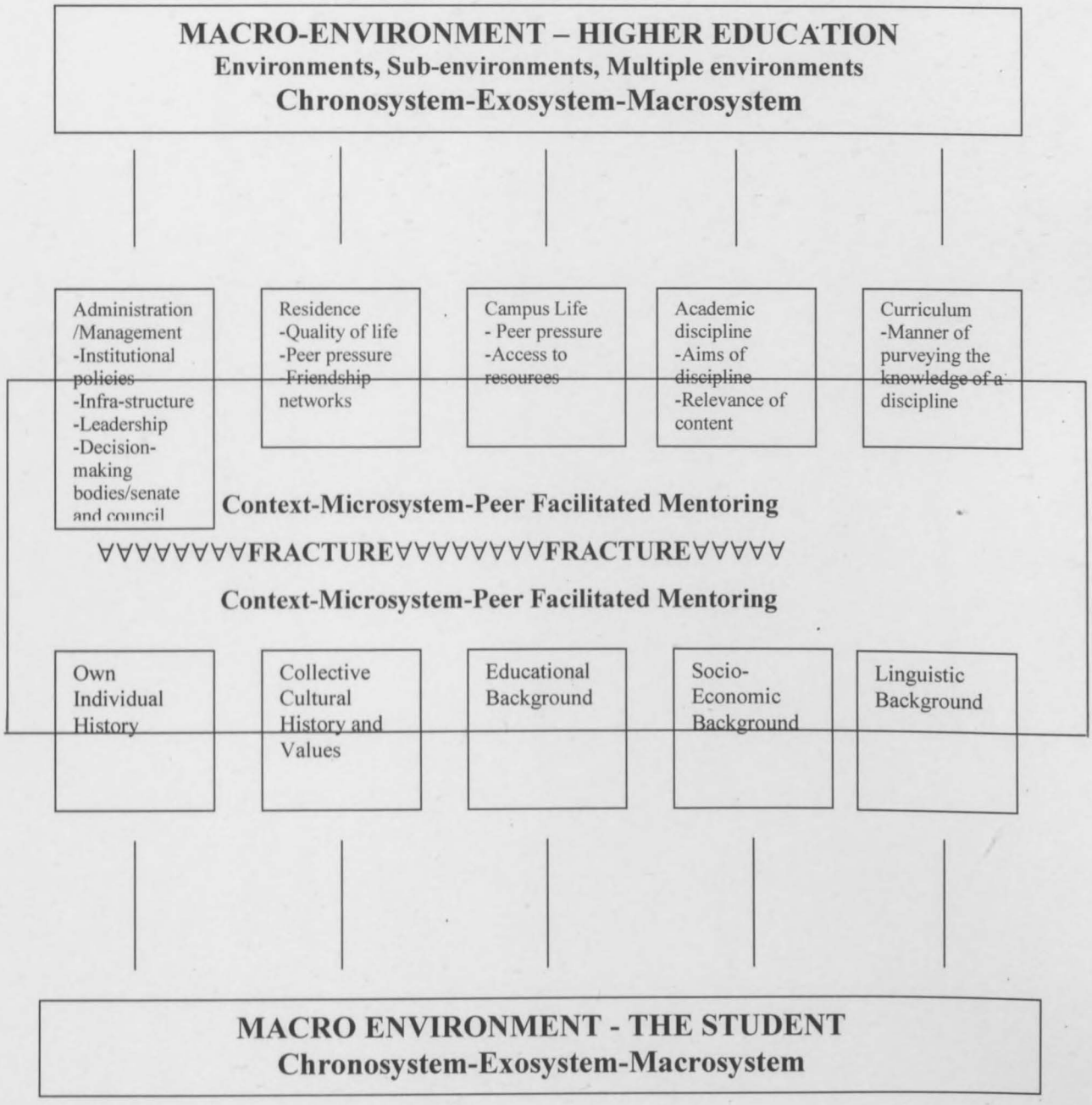


Figure 5.1 illustrates the convergence of two macro-environments, the macro-environment of higher education and the macro-environment of the student, both of which converge to produce particular outcomes. One of the outcomes is the disjointed fragmented experience of the first generation, first year student. Each of the macro environments has, nested within itself, sub-environments specific to its context. Within the macro-environment of higher education five sub-environments have been identified: administration/management/decision-making bodies, residence, campus life, the academic discipline and the curriculum. Within the macro-environment of the student five sub-environments have been identified: own individual history, collective cultural history and values, educational background, socio-economic background and linguistic background. Each of these sub-systems interacts with each other within their own macro-environments, producing particular outcomes. The interaction between these sub-systems and the forces that either pull them together or force them apart, as it pertains to the current study, is presented in the following discussion.

Within the macro-environment of higher education, the institution's vision and mission is the overarching framework within which activities ensue. Institutional policies largely determine the quality of the infrastructure of the campus and the quality of student life at residence. Decision-making bodies such as the council, the senate and the faculty board determine (even if accidentally) the nature of the academic programme and the manner in which the curriculum is designed. Furthermore, there is a level of engagement between the institution and the embedded patterns of behaviour occurring within students' daily life on campus, at the residences and outside of the formal institutional structure. In terms of the results obtained, the most significant interplay of forces occurs between the academic discipline and the curriculum. The content of disciplines is defined primarily and necessarily so by the "professoriate", who by default also design the curriculum. Yet, the greatest challenge facing students is accessing the content and canon of academia. This being the case, it could be concluded that the nature of the relationship between the discipline, the curriculum and the student needs to be reviewed. The significance of the sub-systems nested within the macro-environment of the student is that these sub-systems are largely individual, historical and cultural – the student enters

the higher education system with a set of already established norms, values and academic competence. The conclusions highlight the fact that the sub-systems within the macro-environment of higher education are within the control of the institution and can therefore be manipulated to influence particular outcomes; whereas sub-systems within the macro-environment of the student are not within the control of the institution. Having acknowledged this, the onus rests on the institution to ensure that it understands and addresses the needs of students entering the system, whatever their backgrounds. Institutional attempts to address student needs must, by its very nature, find a balance between the varying and diverse needs of students with the complex and sophisticated demands of higher education.

5.3.3 Peer Facilitated Mentoring as Occurring Between the Mentor and the Mentee Within the Micro-Systems of the Bronfenbrenner Model

Institutional attempts to address student needs are not altogether unrealisable, as is evident from the results achieved on the impact of peer mentoring on student development. Peer facilitated mentoring unfolds at the micro-level of human engagement. It is an interaction between the mentor and the mentee. As a strategy that is directed at human development, the results indicate that peer mentoring incorporates the following attributes as espoused by Bronfenbrenner (1993:10) in his ecology model of human development. Inherent in the one-on-one nature of peer facilitated mentoring, are developmentally instigative characteristics such as role-modelling, coaching, character building, teaching, communicating, and creating a sense of purpose and meaning. These characteristics shape the course of student development positively. At the same time, the process of engaging with a positive 'other' serves to reduce those environmental effects that may have a negative impact on the student. The positive developmentally instigative characteristics, if applied correctly, can potentially serve to counter negative environmental influences.

Bronfenbrenner (1993:10) further claims that these attributes and the processes they invoke are the missing piece that explains the ***how*** as well as the ***what*** of development. There are four types of developmentally instigative characteristics, all of which manifest himself or herself in the peer mentoring process:

a. The first characteristic acts to invite or inhibit particular responses from the environment. For example, different students elicit particular responses from peers and faculty. Where these responses do not contribute to the holistic development of students, mentors serve to re-direct and re-focus student responses through a process of careful guidance and supervision. Since mentors guide on a one-on-one basis, they are able to address issues that emerge out of a diverse student body. The need to 'invite' meaningful behaviour and 'inhibit' meaningless behaviour is critical at the point of entry, in assisting first year students to make a successful adjustment to the demands placed on them by the institution.

b. The second characteristic is referred to as 'selective responsibility' or how individuals characteristically react to and explore their surroundings. For example, students prefer different kinds of activities for different kinds of reasons. Since the selected activities may not necessarily contribute to positive student development, the mentorship programme is useful as it has the potential to structure the immediate (proximal) environment of the student in a manner that introduces particular kinds of meaningful and purposeful activities. For example, the results received from mentees indicate that the mentorship programme introduced them to sporting activities, recreational activities and existing friendship networks that contributed toward their personal and social development.

c. The third characteristic, referred to as 'structuring proclivities', relate to differences in how individuals engage or persist in increasingly complex activities, including reconceptualising and creating new features in the environment. The activities students seek out require increasing levels of critical thinking. In this regard, academic mentoring is able to address diverse student needs, levels of academic

preparedness and motivation. Academic mentoring contributes largely to cognitive development, meta-cognition (thinking about thinking), reviewing assessment practices and self-reflective learning. Peer mentoring also creates opportunities and spaces for students to engage with complex issues in a safe and mutually respectful relationship. Furthermore, the issues that come out of the peer mentoring process generally encourage mentors to effect positive changes in the students' immediate environment, as already indicated in point b above.

d. The fourth characteristic, described as 'directive beliefs', refers to how individuals view their agency in relation to their environments. Students' beliefs about their understanding of the environment will determine their failure or success. As integrators of multiple environments, mentors set direction for their mentees and serve as sources of reconciliation for their students. Mentors lead mentees out of a no-win situation to one within which mentees can explore their potential without much constraint. Mentors give purpose and meaning to the broader purpose of higher education, a process that is very profound in a one-on-one interaction between the mentor and the mentee.

5.3.4 Peer Facilitated Mentoring as Contributing Towards the Professional Development of Mentors

There was unanimous agreement among mentors that the single critical factor that determines the success of mentoring is the commitment of the mentor toward developing their mentees. While mentor commitment underpins the success of mentoring, other factors such as continuous capacity building workshops for mentors, supervision of mentoring and formative assessment of mentor performance are contributory factors to the success of the programme. In addition, the leadership and management of the mentoring programme, largely undertaken by student leaders, determine the direction the programme will take, the quality of the mentoring experience and its overall contribution to institutional development. In the process of mentoring another, mentors were forced to confront their own weaknesses, strengths and value systems and thereby begin the long

and arduous process of self-development. This process led to the development of cognitive, affective and social skills.

In terms of Figure 5.1, peer mentoring begins to mediate between the issues that emerge out of the convergence between the environments of the institution and the mentee. The results received from both mentors and mentees indicate that out of the process of mentoring, mentors developed particular skills. These skills include attributes such as self-discipline, administering time effectively, dealing with negative feedback, listening to others with purpose and intent, liasing with senior officials as well as subordinates, assisting toward problem solving, helping to attach a greater meaning towards higher education, empathising with others, developing particular skills of teaching, learning to negotiate around complex issues and becoming more introspective. The above-mentioned professional attributes help to instil a sense of pride and honour in oneself. Furthermore, exposure to capacity building workshops, led by professional facilitators provides mentors with a perspective on what a future career, in their selected discipline, would entail thereby paving the way towards life-long professional development.

5.3.5 Peer Facilitated Mentoring as Contributing Towards the Organizational Effectiveness of the Institution

In terms of Figure 5.1, the macro-environment of higher education is the most distal influence on the student. Yet, its impact is pervasive and deep, since policies made at the higher levels of the decision-making bodies, such as the faculty boards, senate and the council, have far-reaching implications for what transpires on the ground. Clearly, Figure 5.1 indicates that there is this disjuncture between the student and the institution. The disjuncture manifests itself in the students' inability to come to terms with the demands of higher education and the institution's inability to address student demands successfully. Against this disjuncture, mentors are able to assist mentees in assimilating the values of a new environment, help them in coming to terms with its administrative systems, gradually easing them into internalising the academic culture of the institution, and thereby ensuring that institutional imperatives are realised. The role of the mentor

therefore goes beyond that of merely advocating. In the current structure of the programme there is space for the student voice to be heard. In this way issues that pertain to institutional weaknesses and wastages are raised in the mentorship office and brought to the attention of all units on campus. The outcome of this process is that the organisation of the institution and its ability to meet its own objectives are strengthened.

5.3.6 Different Types of Students Require Different Types of Responses

The first year student intake cannot be said to be a homogeneous student population, since students differ in terms of habits, temperament, personal disposition, aptitude, ability to endure, willingness to endure, level of seriousness and behavioural tendencies. One of the strengths of the current study is that it has been able to highlight or expose the different types of students that make up the student population. Inherent in these differences is the need for appropriate, responsive and flexible interventions. The different types of students on campus can be categorised in terms of three (3) broad categories:

a. The **academically capable** and emotionally mature student who is able to cope with the demands of academia and at the same time takes the requisite interest in his/her studies. This type of student requires very little assistance and generally succeeds in his/her studies.

b. The **academically under-performing** and emotionally mature student who finds it difficult to cope with the demands of academia and at the same times takes the requisite interest in his/her studies. This type of student requires a great deal of scaffolded support and with the necessary assistance performs well in his/her studies.

c. The third type of student is **a mixture of the academically capable student and the academically-under-performing** student who has lost interest in his/her studies and has already made the decision to fail or to drop out. These students display a lack of seriousness, emotional immaturity and lack of responsibility. Some of these types of

students do not find meaning and value in the activities and pursuits of higher education. These are the kinds of students that pose the greatest risk to the institution. Efforts to bring these students into the mainstream of academic life cannot only reside at the level of intervention programmes. Possibly, considerably stronger punitive measures should be applied in order to get these students to honour their academic contract with the institution.

The above categories of students provide a useful framework from within which policy makers and institutional leaders can begin to address the issue of failure, attrition and the nature of various interventions. On the whole, these categories constitute a broad and general basis upon which measures of control can be affected. In terms of the above categories of student types in higher education, the concepts of alienation, engagement and peer facilitated mentoring take on a different meaning. Different, since the issues are not just about students being unable to identify with the broader purpose of higher education, but also about their inability and unwillingness to take themselves to higher levels of academic and cultural advancement.

5.3.7 The Contribution of the Current Study to a Contemporary Understanding of Peer Mentoring in Higher Education

The researcher's point of departure or argument has been consistent and unambiguous throughout the study. An assumption has been made that the first year of higher education can be essentially alienating for first generation students. Another assumption made is that current systems of teaching and learning are unable to deal effectively with the consequences of student isolation from the mainstream of academic life. A third assumption made is that such feelings of alienation and its negative consequences can be addressed through peer facilitated mentoring. These assertions have been supported by the feedback received from respondents. The contribution of the current research to a contemporary understanding of peer mentoring in higher education cannot be ignored. To claim otherwise would be an injustice to those who participated in the study and to those who have benefited from the peer mentor programme. The key contributions of the

current study to an understanding of peer mentoring in higher education can be summed up as follows.

a. The study gives context to the need for peer mentoring in higher education. It does so by locating the micro-processes of teaching and learning to the broader socio-political forces that shape the events transpiring at the institutional level. The policy imperatives of increasing access and equity has a direct, visible and intractable link to the kinds of intervention programmes set up to meet the needs of academically under-prepared students and as such its implications must be explored fully. Against this the study has contributed to an understanding of how and why peer mentoring can enable institutions to realise the goals espoused in the transformation agenda.

b. The study has successfully linked the alienating experience of the student with the peer mentor programme. In this regard, the qualitative study has been exceptionally beneficial since it provides a detailed account of individual student experience as it is lived and experienced by students. The verbatim reporting of the qualitative feedback is not a reflection of a lack of confidence on the part of the researcher. Rather, it is consistent with and in keeping with nature of the study, which seeks to explore the subjective lived experience of the student in a manner that does not render the analysis and interpretation of data sterile and meaningless. The greater benefit of the study is its ability to shed light on the nature of student academic development enrolled at institutions of higher learning in a developing society. The researcher's position has been clear and consistent throughout the study. The position taken by the researcher has been sustained through a process of referring to and drawing on the experiences of alienation among students in higher education, highlighting the weaknesses in current systems of teaching and learning and examining the impact of peer mentoring in different contexts – from industry to university.

c. The descriptions provided by mentors on their role in the programme goes far beyond the textbook understanding of what peer mentoring entails. In essence, peer mentoring is meant to create massive shifts in students' cognitive, emotional and social abilities. The process by which this has been achieved is explored in great detail and in totality. For example, the common descriptions of a peer mentor include being a big brother/sister, an advocate, interpreter, counsellor, coach, learner, consultant and process consultant. In the current study, peer mentors describe their roles as catalysts, galvanises, bridge builders, integrators of multiple environments. In many instances, these descriptions depart from the textbook definition of what defines a peer mentor. The feedback received from respondents serves to redefine the concept of what constitutes a peer mentor in higher education.

d. The study contextualises the process of peer mentoring within the existing practices of teaching and learning at an institutional level. This has been done in 2.4.7.c under the section on Benefits to the Organisation, which clearly synthesises and highlights the integrative and consolidating role of peer mentoring in relation to lectures and tutorials. By far, this must be a key contribution to the discipline since it allows for a macro understanding of peer mentoring in relation to improving the quality of teaching and learning. The researcher was often called upon by institutional managers to justify the existence of the programme. Such justifications were based on the convergent and divergent factors outlined in Figure 2.9.

e. The study makes a strong case for the need for a curriculum on peer mentoring in higher education. For example, mentees identified poor communication among mentors and a lack of availability as weaknesses among mentors. The researcher is of the view that weak communication stems from a lack of structure within the broader systemic processes that influence peer mentoring and must, in the end, be dealt with in a structured and organic form. Furthermore, mentors and mentees were of the view that there should be more structure and purpose to peer

mentoring. In particular, there was great emphasis on the role of assessment practices. It is the researcher's view that such structure can be facilitated through the establishment and implementation of a curriculum. Embedded in the curriculum would be issues of the why, what and how of mentoring. The issue of a mentoring curriculum has been discussed in 5.4.5. in terms of form, content and substance.

f. An area of research often overlooked in the peer mentor programme is the management and administration of the programme. In particular, the role of student leaders, their performance, their capacity to fulfil tasks allocated and their ability to provide visionary leadership deserves far more attention than is presently given. The researcher is of the opinion that the current study provides sufficient quantitative and qualitative data that highlights the significant role played by those who manage a mentor programme. Such data needs to be explored in further studies.

5.3.8 Addressing Issues of Student Alienation in Higher Education

In attempting to deal with the issue of alienation experienced by students in higher education, Mann (2001) proposes for a radical departure from traditional forms of teaching and learning in higher education and posits five responses to the experience of alienation: solidarity, hospitality, safety, redistribution of power and criticality, that has the potential to address experiences of alienation.

a. The first is **solidarity.** Solidarity emphasises the need to demonstrate empathy towards students, "...opening up conversations about, the conditions we – as lecturers and students – find ourselves in..., our positionings into particular subject positions through discourse." Solidarity will serve to guide attempts to dissolve the estrangement experienced through the separation made between 'them', the students, and 'us', the academics.

b. The second is **hospitality** where new members of the community are welcomed and made to feel at home. "Metaphorically, we can provide shelter and nourishment, maps, recommendations for good places to visit, and translations and explanations of strange customs and language."

c. The third is **safety** whereby "...providing safe spaces in which students are accepted and respected, and in which unformed, ambiguous, non-rational, illogical, unclear ideas, expressions and play are welcomed and listened to." These conditions would serve to "...nurture creativity, the desire to learn, and the coming to voice."

d. The fourth is **redistribution of power** that requires examining:

> "...where in our current practice we make decisions that inhibit the student's own control of their learning process, and where and how, especially in our assessment practices, we exert power over the developing selves of our students. We, thus, need to find ways in which we can redistribute power in the educational process in such a way that students can exercise power over their own learning and development."

e. The fifth response is **criticality** where it seems:

> "...that a crucial way out of the experience of alienation, both for ourselves and for our students, is the development of the capacity to become aware of the conditions in which we work, and of the awareness, arising out of criticality – the capacity and opportunity to question, examine, uncover, reframe, make visible and interpret."

These five responses find support in Barnett (1997: 171-172) who argues that it is 'critical energy' – the will on the part of students to invest themselves in their engagements with thinking, self and action – that we need to inspire." Such a will to criticality on the part of students can be enabled through the responses of solidarity, hospitality, safety and the redistribution of power. These responses are further seen as strategies towards a teaching and learning relationship based on an ethical position – using the criterion of justice as a value in education, rather than the criteria of either truth or performativity. It is the value of justice that is central to the development of post-apartheid educational policy in South Africa. And, as Mann (2001: 18) argues: "The

shift to such a position, particularly where it is most lacking within undergraduate teaching, would be radical indeed." However, Mann (2001) does not go beyond these five responses in providing an institutionalised way in which these responses could be realised.

The implication of Mann's arguments is that there is a need for greater and deeper collaboration and co-operation between the student and the institution. For collaborative and co-operative learning to be successful, an essential precondition is that it should be institutionalised and integrated into all aspects of campus life. An all-inclusive strategy, that has the potential to engage with the core issues on the consequences of alienation in a planned, systematic, enduring, sustained and measurable manner, should be implemented. The current study proposes that peer facilitated mentoring has the potential to achieve the outcomes outlined above. The following recommendations are being made in setting up a peer mentor programme for first year students in higher education.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations made emanate from the conclusions drawn and from an analysis and synthesis of a review of the literature study, as well as the empirical evidence obtained from mentees, mentors and faculty co-ordinators.

5.4.1 Institutional Policy

Higher education in South Africa is currently undergoing unprecedented changes – most of which are driven by the need to increase access, ensure equity and respond to the issues emerging out of the process of social redress. The high dropout and low retention rates among first-year students clearly point to the need to review the quality of the learning and teaching experience. That the quality of such experience emanates from some form of institutional policy cannot be ignored. While the institution's management and academic decision makers such as the senate and the faculty boards are responsible for determining the academic curriculum, decisions regarding the nature of student experience outside of the class room reside with student affairs personnel.

At some point, all these stakeholders should come together to create an informed and consistent policy on student development which has a strong focus on converging the academic experience with the social and personal. The process of policy making requires a broader systemic approach, which adequately address issues of student success and retention. A policy on peer mentoring should ideally include the following features: a distinct and well-defined vision and mission regarding student development, an ongoing conversation among stakeholders across the board regarding the manner in which student experience in higher education can be enhanced, a clearly defined and enforceable strategy on the implementation of a peer mentor programme and a commitment to providing the necessary infra-structural resources to ensure that the programme is implemented successfully.

Student representation on formal university structures should not be seen as tokenism or representation meant to fulfil a particular constitution. Student representatives should be trained to represent the concerns of their constituencies, at both the academic and social forums. Such training must ensure that legitimate concerns are raised and addressed in such a manner that the control of power is evenly distributed among all concerned.

5.4.2 The Organisation and Location of the Student Mentorship Programme

Since peer mentors serve as sources of referrals and networkers, the mentorship programme should be centrally located within the broader academic and social programme of the institution. A peer mentor programme should be visibly located within and among other structures at the institution. Mentors should enjoy close ties with every unit that impacts on and contributes toward student development. The lines of accountability and reporting ought to be defined clearly.

Policies that govern the institution and policies that are specific to the programme should overlap and guide the organisation of the programme. The structure of the programme should lend itself to fulfilling the goals of mentoring within the broader goals of the institution. Even though students may lead the programme, the institution needs to locate the programme in a manner that gives the programme seriousness and respectability. The

peer mentor programme cannot just be an ad-hoc response to student needs, but needs to be one that is well integrated with all aspects of institutional life.

5.4.3 A Continuous Assessment of the Needs of First Year Students

While it is possible to establish the needs of first year students, such needs change over time. It should therefore be common practice that the needs of first year students are assessed several times during the course of the year, and from year to year, in order to ensure that the activities of the programme are consistent with the changing needs of mentees. Central to obtaining a comprehensive and balanced account of students' needs, all stakeholders should be brought into the needs assessment process. These stakeholders should include academics since they are able to identify areas of weakness and development, student affairs personnel, personnel at residences, mentors and mentees. Forms of assessment should include both quantitative and qualitative methods. A needs assessment should also include comparative studies across a number of years, since this comparison will better enable decision-makers to profile the nature of student participation in higher education.

5.4.4 Re-establishing the Aims, Objectives and Goals of the Peer Mentor Programme

The aims, objectives and goals of the programme are of necessity based on the needs of the institution and on the needs of students – both of which change over time. The aims, objectives and goals of the programme should therefore be established and re-established taking into account the personal, social and academic needs of students. Establishing what needs to be achieved should be a joint and democratic process that includes all stakeholders. However, the organisers of the mentoring programme should take the final decision.

5.4.5 Implementation of the Programme – The Mentoring Curriculum

A curriculum is generally defined as the *"What", "Why", "Who" and "How"* of mentoring. All four aspects enjoy equal importance in any curriculum. The question that

begs is: "Is there a need for a mentoring curriculum"? and "In higher education?" Based on the feedback received from mentors and mentees, mentoring cannot simply consist of spontaneous and random acts of kindness. Furthermore, the greater part of mentoring focuses on academic issues. Hence, mentoring in higher education, especially amongst first year students, ought to be facilitated in a structured form, with space and opportunities for flexibility. In terms of the four categories outlined above, a peer mentoring curriculum could look as follows:

a. The *"Why"* of mentoring: First year students require much assistance in their transition and adjustment from school to university. The need increases among those students who have been deprived of adequate educational and social experiences. The formal academic programme is unable to address these concerns hence the need for a far more informal and engaging process of learning that reaches out to the hearts and minds of students.

b. The *"Who"* of mentoring: With regard to point a. above, peers appear to be better placed to address the challenges faced by first year students. They are closer in age, closer in experience, closer in terms of cultural and social experience and most importantly they have overcome the hurdles of higher education and are therefore in a fortunate position of serving as role models. Recipients of mentoring should include students wishing to avail themselves of the service. However, attempts should be made to include the academically under-prepared student.

c. The *"What"* of mentoring: The content of mentoring should clearly emerge out of a needs assessment. In terms of the current study, the content of mentoring incorporates aspects of development related to the personal, the social and the academic – with the academic assuming a considerable focus of the mentoring programme. The *"What"* of mentoring should include broader and generic skills with an eventual focus on discipline and subject specific mentoring, since each has its own set of needs, epistemologies, ways of knowing and ways of solving problems. The mentorship programme goes through various stages, from orientation through to

preparing for an examination. All these stages have specific needs and require specific forms of interventions. The mentoring curriculum should incorporate all of this in a well-written document, highlighting areas of need and related forms of intervention. Mentors and mentees should therefore be very closely guided on what the programme entails.

d. The *"How"* of mentoring: The manner in which mentors relate to mentees has already been outlined. However, terms such as big brother, big sister, friend, guide, role model, tutor, door opener should be repeatedly stressed and emphasised to mentors. The *"How"* of mentoring should not be a formal process of learning and teaching, but an informal, collaborative and co-operative process of engagement between peers. The *How"* of mentoring must be emphasised, since it is at the level of one-on-one micro-engagement that deep, profound and transformative learning takes place.

Since the greater focus of mentoring is around academic issues, the mentoring curriculum should be integrated within the broader academic programme and linked closely to both tutorials and lectures.

5.4.6 The Selection and Training of Mentors

Mentors are the purveyors of information to their mentees. The task cannot be undertaken without training, development and some form of support. Factors that should be considered when it comes to the role of mentors in the programme include selection, recruitment and training. These three factors should emerge out of a policy on recruitment so that the process is transparent and fair. The employment of mentors in the programme should be bound to the institution's policy on labour relations. In undertaking this challenge mentors should be taken through a series of developmental workshops, seminars and other opportunities that would enable them to enhance their skills and abilities. Since the programme is led by students, and focuses on building capacity among students, use should be made of opportunities to further develop mentors.

5.4.7 Supervision, Monitoring and Assessment

Given the narrow age-gap between mentors and mentees and the associated possibilities for abuse, the process of mentoring ought to be closely supervised by the mentorship office. The activities of the mentorship programme should be monitored and assessed on a continuous basis so as to ensure that goals are achieved. The mentorship programme has a dual purpose – developing both mentees and mentors.

5.4.8 Follow Up Research

Based on the findings in Chapter 4, it is the researcher's view that the following key areas of research need to be explored in greater detail and depth. These include the following.

a. Given that the greater challenges reside in the area of accessing academic material, there is a need for follow up studies on how mentoring can enhance the teaching and learning process by identifying the role of mentoring in aligning discipline specific epistemologies and personal epistemologies. For example, engineering has its own set of rules in relation to the learning of subject matter and problem solving. The same can be said for the humanities. Alongside this, individual students have their own specific epistemology with regard to the way in which they assimilate and internalise information and knowledge. The question that arises: How can peer mentoring enhance the quality of the teaching and learning experience as it pertains to various disciplines?

b. Following from the above, further research needs to look closely at the area of peer teaching, peer learning and peer assessment. In particular, peer assessment seems to be the driving force behind mentee's understanding of discipline-specific concepts as well as aiding an understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses.

c. As already indicated in 4.4.2, the area of the management of a peer mentor programme has been under researched. Faculty co-ordinators also affirm the importance of their role in leading and administering the programme. Further research could possibly look at the role of those who manage the programme with a focus on capacity building, quality assurance and management related skills.

d. While the current study provides support for the benefits of a peer mentor programme, the focus has been on those students who have participated in the peer mentor programme. It is the researcher's view that a study investigating the reasons why students drop out of the higher education system needs to be undertaken as a matter of national urgency.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The hypotheses and the literature review determined the focus direction for the current study. The following specific aims were set out and achieved:

a. An analysis of the factors that gave rise to the levels of under-preparedness of university students, especially previously marginalized (black) students, was presented.

b. A discussion of factors that contribute toward student alienation in higher education by providing an extensive account of the first year experience of university, its accompanying challenges and the complex needs of first year university students and the subsequent need for peer facilitated mentoring were presented. The discussion included detailing the demands of mainstream university culture in terms of curriculum, administration and social conditions and the subsequent need for and potential impact of peer facilitated mentoring on student development.

c. The above discussion was located within an analysis of the theoretical framework of Mann's perspective on student experience of alienation and engagement in higher education.

d. The various definitions, processes and model/s of peer facilitated mentoring in higher education were presented.

e. A discussion was provided on the role of peer facilitated mentoring in the institutionalised form of the Student Mentorship Programme (SMP) at the Westville campus of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN). The role of peer facilitated mentoring was presented in terms of the following:

- evaluating mentors' and mentees' experience of the peer facilitated mentoring process with regard to their academic, personal and social development with specific reference to their experience of alienation and engagement;
- evaluating how the mentoring process contributes towards the professional development of mentors;
- assessing whether SMP has in any significant way contributed to student success and retention; and
- assessing how SMP contributed towards the effective functioning of the institution.

The results of the study support the hypothesis that the first year experience of higher education can be essentially alienating for first generation students from non-traditional developing societies, and that peer facilitated mentoring holds out the possibility that such alienating experiences can be addressed.

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APPENDIX A

Dear Student

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this questionnaire is to examine your experience of university at the first year and the impact of the student mentorship programme on your ability to cope with the personal, social and academic demands placed on you, as a **first year university student.** Your responses are meant to assist in the strengthening of the Student Mentorship Programme (SMP). Your participation is therefore very important. This study is also part of a doctoral study with the University of Stellenbosch. Permission has been granted by the Acting Co-ordinator, Mr S Balani, through the office of the Dean of Students.

AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

- To collect information related to your experience of university.
- To assess the impact of the peer mentoring programme on your personal, social and academic development.
- To assess whether peer mentoring can contribute towards student success and retention at the university.
- To establish the extent of the need for peer facilitated mentoring in higher education.

HOW TO FILL IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. You are expected to answer each question to the best of your ability.
2. There are 12 pages in the questionnaire. Altogether there are 30 questions.
3. You will need at least 40 minutes to complete this questionnaire.
4. Complete each question by marking with a (√).
5. Please ensure that you respond to all appropriate questions.
6. Section A requires your biographical details and Section B and C requires your responses to various aspects of the mentorship programme.
7. The questionnaire has to be completed by 30 May 2004. Arrangements will be made to collect them from you.

THIS IS ALSO AN ANONYMOUS QUESTIONNAIRE

8. Your responses will be used for research purposes only.
9. For further clarification, you can contact me at 012 – 312 544 or 072 365 0039.
10. The responses will be treated confidentially and will in no way be used to compromise yourself or the University.

YOUR HONEST RESPONSES WILL BE APPRECIATED THANK YOU!

Shaheeda Essack
(Researcher)

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY PLACING A TICK (√) IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK

SECTION A

AGE

1. How old are you?

AGE	√
17 years – 19 years	1
20 years – 22 years	2
23 years – 25 years	3
26 years – 28 years	4
29 years – 31 years	5
32 +	6

RACE/NATIONALITY/GENDER

2. Indicate your nationality, race and gender (this is for statistical reasons only).

RACE				NATIONALITY		GENDER	
African	Indian	Coloured	White	South African	Other (Specify)	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

PHYSICAL CHALLENGE

3. If you are physically challenged, indicate the type of physical challenge.

TYPE OF PHYSICAL CHALLENGE	√
Blind	1
Deaf	2
Physically disabled	3
Other	4

FACULTY

4. Indicate your faculty.

TYPE OF FACULTY	√
Faculty of Humanities	1
Faculty of Law	2
Faculty of Commerce and Management	3
Faculty of Science	4
Faculty of Engineering	5
Faculty of Health Sciences	6

PREVIOUS EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

5. How would you describe your secondary schooling experience as preparation for higher education?

Excellent	1
Good	2
Average	3
Poor	4
Very Poor	5

6. Is this your first enrolment at an institution of higher learning?

YES	1
NO	2
UNSURE	3

LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND

7. Indicate your first language and second language.

LANGUAGE	FIRST LANGUAGE	SECOND LANGUAGE
English	1	13
Afrikaans	2	14
Zulu (Isizulu)	3	15
Xhosa (Isixhosa)	4	16
Swazi (Isiswazi)	5	17
Southern Sotho (Sesotho)	6	18
Northern Sotho (Sipedi)	7	19
Tswana (Setswana)	8	20
Tsonga (Shitsonga)	9	21
Ndebele	10	22
Venda	11	23
Other	12	24

FAMILY BACKGROUND

8. Are you the **first** person in your family to attend university?

YES	1
NO	2
UNSURE	3

9. Indicate your **joint average annual** family income.

JOINT FAMILY INCOME	√
None	1
0 – 9 999	2
R10 000 – R19 999	3
R20 000 – R29 999	4
R30 000 – R39 999	5
R40 000 – R49 999	6
R50 000 – R59 999	7
R60 000 – R69 999	8
R70 000 – R79 999	9
R80 000 – R89 999	10
R90 000 – R99 999	11
R100 000 – R109 999	12
R110 000 –R119 999	13
R120 000 – R129 999	14
R130 000 – R139 999	15
R140 000 – R149 999	16
R150 000 – R159 999	17
R160 000+	18

10. Indicate your parent(s)' or guardian(s)' employment in terms of whether they are professionals, vocational workers or unskilled workers. If you do not have parents, please write none in the appropriate block.

***Professional refers to employment in a profession such as doctor, nurse, teacher, principal, attorney, lecturer or an associated form of employment.**

***Vocational refers to employment in an occupation such as builder, carpenter, artisan, painter, plumber or an associated form of employment.**

***Unskilled refers to employment in an occupation that requires lower level skills and a lower level of education.**

OCCUPATION	MOTHER	FATHER
Professional	1	4
Vocational	2	5
Unskilled	3	6

11. Indicate your parent(s)' guardian(s)' level of education. If you do not have parents or guardians, please write none in the appropriate block.

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	MOTHER	FATHER
None	1	9
Up to Standard 3	2	10
Up to Standard 6	3	11
Up to Standard 8	4	12
Up to matric	5	13
A diploma	6	14
A degree	7	15
A post-graduate qualification	8	16

SECTION B

THE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE OF ALIENATION

Look back at your experience of the first few months at university and answer the following questions

12. Do you feel that you made the correct choice in the selection of the degree you enrolled for?

YES	1
NO	2
UNSURE	3

Motivate your response:

13. Do you feel that the degree you enrolled for will prepare you for a career?

YES	1
NO	2
UNSURE	3

Motivate your response.

14. Do you feel that the school prepared you well for a choice of career before you enrolled at the university?

YES	1
NO	2
UNSURE	3

Motivate your response.

15. Describe what you felt in the first few weeks at the university. Be as descriptive as possible.

_____

_____

_____

_____

16. If you assess your personal, social and academic experience at the university, how would you rate the following items on a scale from 1 to 5?

5 – Fully agree
4 – Agree
3 – Average
2 – Disagree
1 – Fully disagree

ITEM	5	4	3	2	1
A university is about learning practical skills.	1	21	41	61	81
A university is about searching for truth.	2	22	42	62	82
The focus of lectures and tutorials is on developing observable skills.	3	23	43	63	83
The focus of lectures and tutorials is on ensuring a meaningful engagement with the content of the discipline.	4	24	44	64	84
The university treats students as customers.	5	25	45	65	85
There is much about the higher education system that is hidden (not brought to a student's awareness).	6	26	46	66	86
The language of the institution prevents students from meaningfully engaging with significant aspects of the institution.	7	27	47	67	87
The academic culture of the institution prevents students from meaningfully engaging with significant aspects of the institution.	8	28	48	68	88
Students are taken seriously on campus.	9	29	49	69	89
Significant people (lecturers, administrators) take the views of students seriously.	10	30	50	70	90
Students own the teaching and learning process.	11	31	51	71	91
The university is a place of chaos and disorder.	12	32	52	72	92
Students are forced to learn in a language that they do not like.	13	33	53	73	93
Students are able to express themselves creatively.	14	34	54	74	94
The university has too much power over students.	15	35	55	75	95
Most times I feel powerless.	16	36	56	76	96
Students are able to understand why they perform poorly in a test.	17	37	57	77	97
I believe tests and exams at university are intended to fail me.	18	38	58	78	98
Students are able to interact with various aspects of the university so they keep to themselves.	19	39	59	79	99
Students are much safer if they keep to themselves.	20	40	60	80	100

SECTION C

THE INFLUENCE OF THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME (SMP) ON YOU – THE STUDENT

17. Reflect on your experience in the student mentorship programme and rate the following items on a scale from 1 to 5.

5 – Fully agree
4 – Agree
3 – Average
2 – Disagree
1 – Fully disagree

ITEM	5	4	3	2	1
PRE-REGISTRATION ORIENTATION					
The orientation team assisted me in getting to know the campus.	1	35	69	103	137
The orientation team assisted me in the registration process.	2	36	70	104	138
The orientation team assisted me in the selection of a degree programme.	3	37	71	105	139
The orientation team assisted me in finding accommodation.	4	38	72	106	140
The orientation team assisted me in getting financial help.	5	39	73	107	141
ORIENTATION					
The orientation programme was well organised.	6	40	74	108	142
The orientation programme helped me make the adjustment from school to university.	7	41	75	109	143
POST ORIENTATION – PERSONAL AND SOCIAL MENTORING					
I managed to get a mentor who understood my needs.	8	42	76	110	144
My mentor assisted me in the following ways:	9	43	77	111	145
*Build confidence	10	44	78	112	146
*Improve my self-esteem	11	45	79	113	147
*Improve my ability to communicate	12	46	80	114	148
*Improve my ability to communicate in English	13	47	81	115	149
*Improved my assertiveness.	14	48	82	116	150
*Ensured that I was well motivated.	15	49	83	117	151
My mentor explained how my own values differed from those of the university.	16	50	84	118	152
My mentor helped me understand the value system of the university.	17	51	85	119	153
My mentor understood me.	18	52	86	120	154
My mentor introduced me to significant others on campus. These include lecturers, tutors and senior officials who would be able to assist me.	19	53	87	121	155
My mentor helped me to deal with feelings of loneliness.	20	54	88	122	156
My mentor showed me how to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds.	21	55	89	123	157
My mentor was a friend.	22	56	90	124	158
My mentor was a guide.	23	57	91	125	159
My mentor was a role model.	24	58	92	126	160
Mentorship is about nation-building.	25	59	93	127	161
POST REGISTRATION – ACADEMIC MENTORING					
My mentor helped me understand the demands of the various courses.	26	60	94	128	162
My mentor helped me understand the importance of different subjects.	27	61	95	129	163
My mentor provided greater understanding to the purpose of higher education.	28	62	96	130	164
My mentor helped me understand the concepts in my discipline.	29	63	97	131	165
My mentor explained difficult concepts in my mother tongue.	30	64	98	132	166
Mentoring is different from lectures and tutorials.	31	65	99	133	167
My mentor showed me different approaches to learning.	32	66	100	134	168
My mentor was able to guide me on my weaknesses in tests and exams.	33	67	101	135	169
My mentor helped improve my study skills.	34	68	102	136	170

18. Read through the following definitions provided and rate the degree of importance of academic, social and personal mentoring from the first most important, the second most important and the third most important.

1 - First most important
2 - Second most important
3 - Third most important

a. **Academic mentoring is defined as helping the student cope with their academic workload, giving tips on how to study better, acting as a link between staff and students and helping students prepare for tests and examination (La Rose, 1995: 31).**

b. **Social mentoring is generally described as being a friend, acting as a guide, being a role model and being a big brother/sister (La Rose, 1995: 30).**

c. **Personal mentoring focuses on psychosocial functions that relate to the individual's values, motives and behaviour rather than on the individual's ability to perform certain tasks. Counselling and friendship are features of psychosocial mentoring (Lewis, 2001: 73).**

In your opinion, which form of mentoring is the **first most important**, **second most important** and **third most important** to **you**.

FORM OF MENTORING	DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE		
	1	2	3
Academic mentoring	1	4	7
Personal mentoring	2	5	8
Social mentoring	3	6	9

Motivate your response.

19. In discussions with your mentor, which language do you mostly communicate in?

LANGUAGE	√	COMMENTS
English	1	
Afrikaans	2	
Zulu (Isizulu)	3	
Xhosa (Isixhosa)	4	
Swazi (Isiswazi)	5	
Southern Sotho (Sesotho)	6	
Northern Sotho (Sipedi)	7	
Tswana (Setswana)	8	
Tsonga (Shitsonga)	9	
Ndebele	10	
Venda	11	
Other	12	

20. Would you recommend the student mentorship programme to other students?

YES	1
NO	2
UNSURE	3

Motivate your response.

21. What were the **5 most important things** you learnt from the student mentorship programme.

FIVE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS LEARNT FROM THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME
1
2
3
4
5

22. List **5 weaknesses** of the student mentorship programme.

FIVE WEAKNESSES OF THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME
1
2
3
4
5

23. What improvements would you like to see to the student mentorship programme?

_____

_____

_____

24. Would you consider being a mentor?

YES	1
NO	2
UNSURE	3

Motivate your response.

25. List **3** of the **best** qualities manifested by your mentor.

THREE (3) BEST QUALITIES OF A MENTOR
1
2
3

26. List **3** of the **worst** qualities manifested by your mentor.

THREE (3) WORST QUALITIES OF A MENTOR
1
2
3

27. Do you feel that the student mentorship programme can improve the student pass rate?

YES	1
NO	2
UNSURE	3

Motivate your response.

28. Do you feel that students are more likely to continue with their studies because of their participation in the student mentorship programme?

YES	1
NO	2
UNSURE	3

Motivate your response.

29. Read through the following definitions and rate the following items, according to the scale from 1 to 5, in terms of the extent to which the description fits a mentor.

5 – Fully agree
4 – Agree
3 – Average
2 – Disagree
1 – Fully disagree

***An opportunity provider (advocate) creates opportunities for people to learn or to develop competence (Lewis, 2000: 1-26).**

***An interpreter transmits the culture of the university by virtue of knowing the ropes (Lewis, 2000: 1-26).**

***A process consultant helps the learner make sense of the broader requirements of the specific relationship by defining objectives, monitoring progress, solving problems, etc. (Lewis, 2000: 1-26).**

***A learning consultant acts as a consultant adviser on matters associated with learning (Lewis, 2000: 1-26).**

***A coach intervenes directly to pass on knowledge. (Lewis, 2000: 1-26).**

***A counsellor acts in the best interests of students by having a high degree empathy and communication skills. Can be described as a friend, adviser, guide, guardian and so on (Lewis, 2000: 1-26).**

ITEM	5	4	3	2	1
Opportunity provider	1	7	13	19	25
Interpreter	2	8	14	20	26
Process consultant	3	9	15	21	27
Learning consultant	4	1	16	22	28
Coach	5	11	17	23	29
Counsellor	6	12	18	24	30

30. Write a brief narrative (paragraph) on your experience of the mentorship programme. **This question is optional.**

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED AT THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW WITH MENTORS

The discussion will be based on the following questions:

a. How would you describe the needs of first year students?

b. How do faculty mentors see the broader purpose of mentoring?

c. How do faculty mentors see the objectives of mentoring?

d. How do faculty mentors define and describe their roles as mentors?

e. How do faculty mentors actually practise mentoring?

f. What are your views on the planning, organisation and implementation of the Student Mentorship Programme (SMP)?

g. What is your experience of the capacity building workshops for mentors?

h. Did your participation in the mentorship programme as a mentor contribute to your professional development?

i. Does SMP help in advancing the goals of the institution?

j. What are the weaknesses, pitfalls and problem areas?

APPENDIX C

Dear Faculty Co-ordinator

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gain feedback from you, as faculty co-ordinators, on your experience of the student mentorship programme with regard to the following facets of the programme:

i. Administration including planning, organisation, implementation, management and supervision.
ii. Resource allocation including infra-structural capacity.
iii. Training the trainer including capacity building workshops for mentors and supervision of mentors.
iv. The mentoring curriculum.
v. Evaluation of the programme and the contribution of mentorship to student academic development.

Your participation is therefore very important. This study is also part of a doctoral programme with the University of Stellenbosch. Permission has been granted by the Acting Co-ordinator, Mr S Balani, through the office of the Dean of Students.

AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

- To gather information related to your experience in assisting in the planning, organisation and management of the Student Mentorship Programme (SMP).
- To gather information related to your experience in the training of mentors, the design of the mentoring curriculum, supervision of mentors and management of mentors.
- To assess whether the resource allocation and current infra-structure is adequate to achieve the goals of SMP.
- To assess whether peer mentoring can contribute towards student success and retention at the university.
- To establish the extent of the need for peer facilitated mentoring in higher education.
- Recommendations for the future and for policy-makers.

HOW TO FILL IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

11. You are expected to answer each question to the best of your ability.
12. There are 7 pages in the questionnaire. Altogether there are 15 questions.
13. You will need at least 1 hour to complete this questionnaire.
14. Complete each question by marking with a (√).
15. Please ensure that you respond to all appropriate questions.
16. Section A requires your biographical details and Section B requires your responses to various aspects of the mentorship programme.

17. The questionnaire has to be completed by 30 June 2004. Arrangements will be made to collect them from you.

THIS IS ALSO AN ANONYMOUS QUESTIONNAIRE

18. Your responses will be used for research purposes only.
19. For further clarification, you can contact me at 012 – 312 544 or 072 365 0039.
20. The responses will be treated confidentially and will in no way be used to compromise yourself or the University.

YOUR HONEST RESPONSES WILL BE APPRECIATED THANK YOU!

Shaheeda Essack
(Researcher)

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY PLACING A TICK (√) IN THE APPROPRIATE BLOCK

SECTION A

AGE

31. How old are you?

AGE	√
20 years – 25 years	1
26 years – 30 years	2
31 years – 35 years	3
35+	4

RACE/GENDER/NATIONALITY

32. Indicate your race, gender and nationality (this is for statistical reasons only).

RACE				NATIONALITY		GENDER	
African	Indian	Coloured	White	South African	Other (Specify)	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

HIGHEST QUALIFICATION

33. Indicate your highest qualification.

QUALIFICATION	√
Matric	1
First degree (Indicate which)	2
Honours (Indicate which discipline)	3
Masters (Indicate which discipline)	4
Phd	5

34. Are you currently enrolled for a qualification?

YES	1
NO	2

35. If yes, indicate which qualification you are enrolled for.

_____

36. How long have you been employed as a faculty co-ordinator?

NUMBER OF YEARS EMPLOYED	√
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
4+	5

SECTION B

These questions are open-ended and qualitative in nature. They aim to elicit in-depth , wide and diverse feedback.

Administration of the programme

i. **Planning can be regarded as the creation of a set of decisions for future action, which are directed at the optimum realisation of objectives (Badenhorst, 1992: 68).**

ii. **Organisation entails the manner in which tasks are to be divided; which and how many posts are to be created; the relationship between the persons and the posts; and the creation of the channels of communication between the various persons and posts (Badenhorst, 1992: 68).**

iii. **Management in the class is regarded as those managerial activities of the teacher that not only make effective instruction and learning in the classroom possible, but that can also take place *concurrently* with the instruction (Badenhorst, 1992: 71).**

iv. **Leadership is defined as planned by the teacher (faculty co-ordinators) to encourage, inspire and motivate the pupils (Badenhorst, 1992: 68).**

v. **Supervision, control and authority is defined as the right of the education manager to take decisions and assign tasks to subordinates for them to carry out in the interests of the organisation's objectives (Badenhorst, 1992: 68).**

37. How would you describe the effectiveness of the **planning** of the peer mentoring programme?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

38. How would you describe the effectiveness of the **organisation** of the peer mentoring programme?

39. How would you describe the effectiveness of the **management** of mentors in the peer mentoring programme?

40. How would you describe the effectiveness of **leadership** within the peer mentoring programme?

SECTION C

Infra-structural allocation and resource allocation

41. Do you believe that the programme is sufficiently resourced to meet the goals of the student mentorship programme?

YES	1
NO	2
UNSURE	3

42. If, yes, please motivate your response.

SECTION D

Evaluation of the programme

Curriculum is defined as 'the set of broad inter-related decisions about what is taught that characterize the general framework from within teaching (mentoring) is planned and learning takes place' (Miller, 1987:6)

43. How would you rate the effectiveness of the mentoring curriculum in meeting the needs of first-year students?

LEVEL OF EFFECTIVENESS	√
Very Effective	1
Effective	2
Average	3
Uneffective	4
Very Uneffective	5

44. Please motivate your response.

SECTION E

Recommendations for the future

45. What recommendations do you have for the future development of the programme?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX D1

TABLE 4.13

POSITIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO THE CHOICE OF A DEGREE

➢ Reason being that I love working with people, helping and assisting them whenever in need. And this field of study that I chose gives me the opportunity to do so. And when I do qualify I know that I will be enjoying what I am doing.
➢ I am coping with the course.
➢ I think I have fulfilled my dream. I get every help I need when having problems. It makes this degree easy to understand.
➢ Because it is what I wanted.
➢ Science and mathematics are my strong points.
➢ I am coping. I am getting good marks.
➢ Chose degree I dreamt of.
➢ Good catalyst for me to build a career.
➢ Not sure will wait for the exams to see if it was a great choice.
➢ Because in a way it is a repeat of what I did back home and I wanted to pursue it because it is the right way.
➢ From the time I was little I wanted to qualify to be a pharmacist.
➢ Yes, I made a correct choice because I was willing to do Political Science and I enjoy the subject.
➢ I enjoy the degree I am currently studying.
➢ Will enable me to enter a career with skills and knowledge.
➢ Because it is related to medicine and I like working with Biology.
➢ Job in demand
➢ People in faculty were helpful, interesting and motivating.
➢ Enjoying everything but not getting symbol A.
➢ I have learnt more about the degree and now I don't like it I love it.
➢ Because it is something I enjoy.
➢ Before enrolling I attended a career development programme.
➢ I am performing well although it is tough. I think I am managing.
➢ Because there is more job opportunities in this career.
➢ Would love to enrol myself into Physiotherapy next year.
➢ Because I think that doing Political Science will open more chances of employment in Government as well as the private sector.
➢ I enjoy the course I have chosen.
➢ Yes, I am adamant that this is the career path I would like to follow.
➢ I love Accounting and have therefore decided to choose the BAcc course.
➢ I always enjoy Geography.
➢ Yes, it is something that I liked doing.
➢ I am not sure because I think I wasn't sure about my choice, but it is still OK, because I am enjoying what I am doing.
➢ Yes, because it will make me know about my economy in our country and the country to grow bigger and have more resources to be proud of.
➢ The degree leads to the profession I want and there is nothing I cannot handle.
➢ Although a lot of work, I am enjoying it and feel satisfied.
➢ Because I came late, my first choice was full and my points were low.
➢ I am a peoples' person. I love working with people and this degree gives me the opportunity to do this.
➢ I think I have made the correct choice by choosing a degree in Tourism.
➢ Because my degree goes together with my personality and my degree requires that.
➢ Yes, most definitely. I have always had a passion for working with and helping people. I therefore feel that the degree that I have chosen will help me feel fulfilled as a person.

TABLE 4.13 (CONTINUED)

POSITIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO THE CHOICE OF A DEGREE

➢ Yes. I do feel that I made the correct choice in the selection of the degree I enrolled for as I always wanted to get into Health sciences as I enjoy Chemistry and Biology. I also enjoy research.
➢ Because I definitely want to become a psychologist and I will do whatever it takes to become one.
➢ I am doing very well in most of the subjects I have chosen.
➢ My future plans are based on the courses that I am doing. That is why I am doing commercial course, I want to be a CA.
➢ What I chose was a foundation programme, which I know has and will prepare me for mainstream and my career.
➢ Yes, I am enjoying it and there is a demand in the market place for Engineers.
➢ Yes, because I have a good mentor that explains everything to me.
➢ Yes, because I am also doing well in my studies.

TABLE 4.14

NEGATIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO THE CHOICE OF A DEGREE

➢ Enrolled for a degree I do not like. Preferred the BAdmin.
➢ Not sure will wait for the exams to see if it was a great choice.
➢ Not what I initially applied for.
➢ I don't have a clue as to what I will do next year.
➢ Too much work in a short space of time, especially Chemistry.
➢ But only if I truly understood what was basically occurring and I had detailed information on the future work opportunities I would be happy.
➢ I was coming to do BComm/BAdmin but it was already full.
➢ My main aim was to do MSc Geology but I ended up doing BSC MS1 which wasn't one of my choices.
➢ Because it is not what I applied to do, I ended up doing this course because I had a shortage of points (entrance).
➢ I did not have enough points to do BComm (Law) so I am doing BAdmin (Economics) to get in.
➢ Because I came late, my first choice was full and my points were low.
➢ I am not sure if I made the correct choice.
➢ Firstly, I wanted to do Electrical Engineering but because I couldn't meet the required points I did not qualify. Secondly, at the beginning I did not know what was going on with the modules.
➢ Unsure, because I do not know what I will do when I complete my degree.

TABLE 4.15

NEUTRAL RESPONSES RELATING TO THE CHOICE OF A DEGREE

➢ Intend to register for B Comm (Economics).
➢ Not sure will wait for the exams to see if it was a great choice.
➢ I was coming to do BComm/BAdmin but it was already full
➢ I did not have enough points to do BComm (Law) so I am doing BAdmin (Economics) to get in.

APPENDIX D2

TABLE 4.17

POSITIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO THE CHOICE OF A DEGREE IN PREPARATION FOR A CAREER

➢ Yes, so I can find a job easily afterwards.
➢ My profession is recognised internationally
➢ Engineering has much scope.
➢ It will depend on what I achieve.
➢ After researching the field I realised that there is a large scope for it.
➢ Yes, because I am learning what I will do outside.
➢ Theory is integrated with practice.
➢ I hope to open a pharmacy when I go back home.
➢ Help me be a good lawyer.
➢ Teaches us all aspects of a career.
➢ I hope so because we do practicals, which will assist us in our careers.
➢ Because you have something at the end of it which will prepare you for a career.
➢ It will prepare me for my career because I intend to be a politician and a political analyst.
➢ Yes, we do extensive work in each module. The way in which the module is structured helps you to prepare for the working world.
➢ In demand.
➢ This degree will teach me the numerous skills that I will need to be a successful person.
➢ I see advertisements looking for people for what I want to be – I also believe I can create my own job.
➢ It will teach me how to behave like a professional.
➢ Yes there is a demand for Engineers in the market.
➢ I like working with figures and that is exactly where I will end up.
➢ Because this degree will give me a chance to accumulate first hand knowledge about business and if I don't get employed I could start my own business.
➢ Want to be a CA.
➢ Because it will not lead me to be a CA.
➢ Yes, because Political Science has many career paths in Civil Society. Government, international agencies, private sector, public sector and the NGOs.
➢ Will be able to do Physiotherapy.
➢ This corresponds to the fact that I am not doing Geology.
➢ All the things I am doing are related to the work situation.
➢ BAcc is very encouraging in terms of a future course in Accounting
➢ I want a career in the environment field.
➢ I enjoy working with people and my course allows me to do that.
➢ I am positive about my career and there are lots of jobs out there.
➢ Yes, it will prepare me for my career because it will make sure that I am going to pass my degree and I want to be successful in life. I want to help myself and be proud of who I am in the future.
➢ Qualifying in Accounting has always been my dream and from what I have been taught so far, I feel I am being fully prepared for my career.
➢ I think that it will prepare me since it involves the management and administration of tourism companies.
➢ It is very practical.
➢ Because it will give me the good job.
➢ Because all the theory I am learning through my subjects will help me a lot in terms of organising my career, what career I want to take up, ie, whether to be a manager or open up my own business.
➢ The degree that I am currently enrolled for is from the Faculty of Health Sciences. There are lots of career options and scope, not only in this country but world-wide as well.
➢ I have always wanted to do medical/pharmaceutical research and I hope that a BSc Physiology Degree will prepare me for a career.

TABLE 4.17 (CONTINUED)

POSITIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO THE CHOICE OF A DEGREE IN PREPARATION FOR A CAREER

➢ At the moment I am studying psychology and I intend becoming a psychologist
➢ They go hand in hand with the Chartered Accountancy. That is why I chose Accountancy as my major subject.
➢ I intend to make the most of the knowledge I gain in the degree I enrolled for. So my gaining more knowledge will in turn give a brighter career field.
➢ Yes, because I am studying the things that I think will help me in my career.
➢ This corresponds to the fact that I am not doing Geology.
➢ Yes, I chose it because I liked it.

TABLE 4.18

NEGATIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO THE CHOICE OF A DEGREE IN PREPARATION FOR A CAREER

➢ Registered for a BA General will take me nowhere.
➢ Not sure what career I will get into.
➢ Because we do courses that are irrelevant to the working world.
➢ Because it will not lead me to be a CA.
➢ Unsure, things are different out of university.
➢ Because, I haven't seen much in my degree.

APPENDIX D3

TABLE 4.20

POSITIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO THE ROLE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLING IN PREPARATION FOR A CAREER

➢ We were given a choice of a career.
➢ It was my after school experience that prepared me for my career choice. I was fortunate to spend 3 years in the UK develop my social and meta-physical skills. It was through interaction with various modalities that I was able to make my career choice.
➢ They emphasised assignments and projects which carried very low marks.
➢ They also emphasised tests.
➢ We had career guidance, etc.11
➢ The institutions visited out school giving more details in each career. I understood and liked the degree.
➢ I have done the basics for some of the subjects in school.
➢ My favourite subjects were Chemistry and Physical Science and my teachers made sure that I fully understood every aspect being taught. My degree will be dealing chiefly with Chemistry. I feel that since my foundation with Chemistry at school was good, I will succeed in every course of Chemistry that I do.
➢ I did Sciences in school and they always encouraged us to do subjects according to what we want to do afterward.
➢ Yes, we had skilled teachers who allowed various people in professional fields to come and talk to us and inform us about the challenges in interested fields.
➢ They helped us explore the various careers highlighting the importance of each career. They helped us to find the things that we like and to use this as a yardstick in choosing a career.
➢ Gave booklets, pamphlets, etc.
➢ Taught us self-belief.
➢ I knew what I wanted to do but as the year progressed I wasn't sure as to what I wanted to do.
➢ Because what is happening right now is what I expected.
➢ The teachers advised me.
➢ They did a good job inviting different universities.
➢ I knew I wanted to be a CA so much of my time I devoted to Accounting.
➢ Because the standard is not that different from Grade 12 that is pressure, tests, notes, hard work, etc. I am sure that knowledge accumulated at school is helpful today.
➢ I had lots of choices.
➢ We had counselling to help us choose the right courses for our career.
➢ Because I am good in Mathematics and figures and CA need this kind of person
➢ Did high standards health science modules and have background understanding.
➢ I had good teachers.
➢ The subjects that I did at high school were helpful.
➢ In school I did sciences and now I do humanities. Science did not help me with this course.
➢ School did prepare me for a good choice of career because they help a lot, they try organising people to motivate us to work hard and have good grades in order to get in the university they help us see which degrees are right.
➢ I have been good in Accounting in school and am continuing the good work at university. So I believe that I have been well prepared.
➢ I did not study tourism in school but I studied tourism.
➢ Because they explain to me what is needed in my career.
➢ I am responsible and disciplined.
➢ Because well before I reached matric I was well aware what career I want to take up and why.

TABLE 4.20 (CONTINUED)

POSITIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO THE ROLE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLING IN PREPARATION FOR A CAREER

➢ The school that I attended invited lecturers from universities throughout South Africa. They were from different faculties and made us familiar with the different career options. We attended many career options and a very helpful guidance counsellor was ever ready to get more information on any career that we were interested in.
➢ Before I came here I knew that I wanted to do Engineering but I did not know what challenges I am going to face out there.
➢ Many professional people were invited to help us know about their profession and find out how it is good for use. I even did career counselling at my school.
➢ Offered us guidance and took us to a career exhibition.
➢ I did Accounting when I was in Grade 8. So I do not have much problem with a variety Accounting cause I did it in high school.
➢ Fairly high standard of education.
➢ Because the subjects that I did not study at school, I am studying at university.
➢ Career expose and guest speakers

TABLE 4.21

NEGATIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO THE ROLE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLING IN PREPARATION FOR A CAREER

➢ Having difficulty with Chemistry.
➢ No, because I did my schooling in the time of apartheid where we were given wrong information.
➢ Teachers told us nothing.
➢ They did not supply us with inside information that we required to make a good responsible choice therefore leaving us with much food for thought. Which was ultimately difficult because we were not able to get what we wanted.
➢ Not many career experts.
➢ The path taken in my secondary school did not have much things I do at university.
➢ No, because I did my schooling in the time of apartheid where we were given wrong information.
➢ We did not have sufficient qualified teachers and did not receive any counselling.
➢ No, school had a bad reputation of bad pass rate.
➢ No, that is why I am in SMP and I have a mentor to assist me.
➢ Having difficulty with Chemistry.
➢ In our schools we did not have proper labs, no maths and science teachers and we did not do our own experiments. That is why I am a bit lost.
➢ Because there were not enough facilities such as equipment, books, etc.
➢ Because most of the subjects I do at university, I did not do at school.
➢ Unsure, because of the lack of teachers in my school that resulted to many disadvantages like being illiterate when it comes to computers.
➢ We had no counselling for career choices.
➢ Although we had Accounting as a subject, we did not have career counselling and other forms of help to choose a career to prepare us for a chosen career.
➢ By the time I completed matric, I wasn't sure what degree I was going to study.
➢ In school I did sciences and now I do humanities. Science did not help me with this course.
➢ I did not study tourism in school but I am studying tourism.
➢ At school they never tell which subjects (commercial/science) you have to do so you just choose it yourself. Same as university.
➢ Because I am still not sure whether I made the correct choice.

TABLE 4.21 (CONTINUED)

NEGATIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO THE ROLE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLING IN PREPARATION FOR A CAREER

➢ I stated unsure because although we were given career counselling at school, I still feel that they didn't prepare us very well. We had to make our own choices and I still know people who are unsure about what to do with the lives after matric.
➢ Before I came here I knew that I wanted to do Engineering but I did not know what challenges I am going to face out there.
➢ No really! Because we were not told about different careers that you could get into. Although I wanted to become a psychologist, I actually didn't know what was expected of me/what subjects I should have taken.
➢ The school didn't give us a choice for giving us a career.
➢ Because I didn't get enough points to do the degree I want to do.

APPENDIX D4

TABLE 4.22

POSITIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS IN THE FIRST WEEKS AT UNIVERSITY

➢ It was very enjoyable.
➢ I knew where to go and felt happy.
➢ The change from campus to high school was enormous but great. I like the girls.
➢ Being in a socially different atmosphere, I was unsure of what was expected of myself in the context of a different environment. After realising that there were many students experiencing the same feelings of uncertainty that I was feeling, we all were able to relate to each other, each on eof us making the other comfortable. Our faculty provided us with an academic social mentorship programme, also a week of orientation where we were able to bond and ice-break with our fellow students. This made the next few weeks of university a little less tense in terms of the new environment we all were in.
➢ I was rather enthusiastic and excited for the new found experience. I was also scared about being initiated and at the same time happy about meeting people.
➢ A lot of freedom with no pressure from teachers.
➢ Ability to work at my own pace which is accelerating for the better.
➢ The first few weeks were exciting as new things were happening quickly. I met new people and saw new things which I was not exposed to before. I was a bit nervous when it came down to doing work because I didn't know what to expect, whether it would be easy or difficult to complete. Making friends wasn't a task because I was a jolly person as I said earlier I like interacting with people. As time went on some people who were on campus for fun began to annoy me, then things started going downhill, it wasn't related to workload because I am used to it by now, it is more like the environment.. It has to a certain extent become boring and a bit depressing, but my friends stay strong and we keep each other happy.
➢ I had problems with my courses. I had to de-register some of them and my mentor helped me through the process.
➢ To tell you the truth I was scared. I never thought that life out here is just normal as life at high school. It is just that now we have to be more matured and independent and not spoon feeding. So far so good, I am adjusting to the changes. For the courses, it was difficult, we had a lot of work tests and no time, I almost felt like packing my bags and going back home, but couldn't.
➢ I did not feel so left out because my cousin is at the university and she helped me get familiar with the campus and make new friends. I met a lot of friends in the orientation week and when we met our mentors they introduced us to other students. Lectures and note-taking was difficult. But I soon adjusted with the assistance of my mentor.
➢ I felt more responsible but at the same time scared. However, my fear was short-lived. I really enjoy the responsibility placed on me. There are no "teachers" to make sure you attend lectures therefore I have made it my responsibility to go to every lecture and be punctual. My mentor really made me feel comfortable and I look forward to meeting her each day. It was a total different atmosphere for me because there was a lot of intermingling of races which was a good experience. However personal belongings soon go missing and once again I was afraid. I have learnt to become more aware of my surroundings. These have been interesting life experiences for me.
➢ I was rather enthusiastic and excited for the new found experience. I was also scared about being initiated and at the same time happy about meeting people.
➢ First few weeks are very hard because university is different from high school. For me it was hard because it was a long time before I was in school. It was a different environment.
➢ Excited but not very comfortable since I wasn't prepared.

TABLE 4.22 (CONTINUED)

POSITIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS IN THE FIRST WEEKS AT UNIVERSITY

➢ I did not really like the first few weeks. It wasn't culture shock but it was different from my country of origin. I hail from a small island (Mauritius) and things here are moving too fast. Even the South African mentality is different. But luckily on the whole everyone was friendly. I am better able to adjust now and on campus we have international meetings. Academically everything is going on quite smoothly.
➢ Very free. Lots of freedom here. People are allowed to smoke here. No one stops you and tells you to shave as they did in high school. Very easy to speak to people because they are all friendly. Most people here are very mature. Challenging a little because of workload. Not yet accustomed to 8 to 5 hours. Lots of facilities here which is very exciting. Besides academic work we are encouraged to do some kind of sport.
➢ Everything was difficult and I even felt like quitting but for now everything is just fine and going well.
➢ I was rather enthusiastic and excited for the new found experience. I was also scared about being initiated and at the same time happy about meeting people.
➢ First few weeks are very hard because university is different from high school. For me it was hard because it was a long time before I was in school. It was a different environment.
➢ Excited but not very comfortable since I wasn't prepared.
➢ I felt that university wasn't a place for people like me but for the help I received I didn't feel like that anymore.
➢ It was a whole new experience. It gave us many challenges.
➢ I was very excited but I was a bit unsure about what was going on. Lucky I was allocated a mentor who showed me around.
➢ Like a little fish in a big pond, but excited and motivated.
➢ I knew where to go and felt happy.
➢ I felt out of place at first but I blended into the environment.
➢ I was very happy at first because it was my first year at the university and I was studying for my career in the future. The other students were very welcoming and I met new friends but at the end I am still very happy about my life at this university.
➢ With the help of the Department orientation and the helpfulness, support and friendliness of all staff and other students, I felt very little anxiety. The Department was well organised and we even met and got to know our class mates really well. Our mentors did an excellent job in showing us where our lectures would be and even motivating us and helping us to overcome our anxiety. Now almost 4 months later, I feel as if I was at this university and in this department for a very long time.
➢ Actually I was very excited and very enthusiastic about entering a new level of study. I looked forward to meeting new friends, choosing my modules, etc. To me it was a new exciting venture coming from high school.
➢ I didn't feel the way I expected to feel, lost and isolated, but since the mentors were provided to help us in every step on our way.
➢ I was having a low self-esteem, but with mentorship I gained my self-esteem.
➢ I feel good because I meet new friends and new people using different languages.
➢ At first I was excited but I didn't know that you have to be more committed to your work. But as time goes you get the hang of it. I enjoy being a student of UKZN.
➢ Everything was new to me but the next day it was much better.
➢ Ability to work at my own pace which is accelerating for the better.

TABLE 4.23

NEGATIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS IN THE FIRST WEEKS AT UNIVERSITY

➢ Difficult to listen to lectures and take down notes at the same time. Thinking of suicide.
➢ It began with a feeling of trepidation as this was a place we haven't seen before, we were used to a school atmosphere as I met friends and met people. I became excited to be here.
➢ Being in a socially different atmosphere, I was unsure of what was expected of myself in the context of a different environment. After realising that there were many students experiencing the same feelings of uncertainty that I was feeling, we all were able to relate to each other, each one of us making the other comfortable. Our faculty provided us with an academic social mentorhsip programme, also a week of orientation where we were able to bond and ice-break with our fellow students. This made the next few weeks of university a little less tense in terms of the new environment we all were in.
➢ I felt overwhelmed by the huge amount of work compared to school. I also felt very nervous as I did not know what to expect of the varsity lifestyle.
➢ A lot of freedom with no pressure from teachers.
➢ Most of the staff, foreigners and people who do not have English as their primary language are very hard to understand and very unfriendly.
➢ Afraid of initiation. Difficulty finding my way around campus. Tried to make as many friends as possible and adjust to the 8h00 to 5h00 routine.
➢ I was stressed but not much. Just the stress to be a first year. First point I didn't have enough text-books so I believed that I would fail because I cannot study. I was looking down upon myself because I saw other students wearing nice clothes; having cell phones and at residence they were eating delicious foods. I was embarrassed because I thought that I wasn't supposed to be at university but now I understood that we come from different families so I all I want is Education. It was difficult too.
➢ Fascinating, scared and had these new feelings about being somewhere very different from my previous educational experience.
➢ I had problems with my courses. I had to de-register some of them and my mentor helped me through the process.
➢ To tell you the truth I was scared. I never thought that life out here is just normal as life at high school. It is just that now we have to be more matured and independent and not spoon feeding. So far so good, I am adjusting to the changes. For the courses, it was difficult, we had a lot of work tests and no time, I almost felt like packing my bags and going back home, but couldn't.
➢ It was so irritating because I did not know many places like when I am supposed to attend and only to find that I don't know the venue, so I had to look for it and when I find it, the lecture was already finished.
➢ Everything was difficult and I even felt like quitting but for now everything is just fine and going well.
➢ Confused worried a bit confused because of all the changes – transport, living away from home, no friends, confused on career.
➢ I did not feel so left out because my cousin is at the university and she helped me get familiar with the campus and make new friends. I met a lot of friends in the orientation week and when we met our mentors they introduced us to other students. Lectures and note-taking was difficult. But I soon adjusted with the assistance of my mentor.
➢ I felt more responsible but at the same time scared. However, my fear was short-lived. I really enjoy the responsibility placed on me. There are no "teachers" to make sure you attend lectures therefore I have made it my responsibility to go to every lecture and be punctual. My mentor really made me feel comfortable and I look forward to meeting her each day. It was a total different atmosphere for me because there was a lot of intermingling of races which was a good experience. However, personal belongings soon go missing and once again I was afraid. I have learnt to become more aware of my surroundings. These have been interesting life experiences for me.

TABLE 4.23 (CONTINUED)

NEGATIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS IN THE FIRST WEEKS AT UNIVERSITY

➢ I did not really like the first few weeks. It wasn't culture shock but it was different from my country of origin. I hail from a small island (Mauritius) and things here are moving too fast. Even the South African mentality is different. But luckily on the whole everyone was friendly. I am better able to adjust now and on campus we have international meetings. Academically, everything is going on quite smoothly.
➢ Very free. Lots of freedom here. People are allowed to smoke here. No one stops you and tells you to shave as they did in high school. Very easy to speak to people because they are all friendly. Most people here are very mature. Challenging a little because of workload. Not yet accustomed to 8 to 5 hours. Lots of facilities here which is very exciting. Besides academic work we are encouraged to do some kind of sport.
➢ Everything was difficult and I even felt like quitting but for now everything is just fine and going well.
➢ Confused worried a bit confused because of all the changes – transport, living away from home, no friends, confused on career.
➢ Nervous at times but most importantly I felt very bad because I knew that I wasn't going to do something that I like.
➢ Coming to an almost different it was confusing and it took me some time to adjust and to clearly see and understand how things operate. At first things are moving very fats. By the time you come to understand things you are lost.
➢ First few weeks are very hard because university is different from high school. For me it was hard because it was a long time before I was in school. It was a different environment.
➢ Unsure afraid did not know what to expect with lectures, lecturers. The interaction with many people was very difficult.
➢ A total change had occurred in my routine. I felt scared as I did not know what to expect and I had to get used to a different environment. It took time to adapt to the difference in teaching.
➢ I felt like I was lost and felt like I am going to repeat a year but I told myself that in order to do what I want I must work hard.
➢ I felt lost, unaccommodated and unconfident.
➢ I felt lost and scared and that I won't be able to cope with the university work.
➢ I felt afraid when I saw the huge crowd. I felt like going back home. I was confused and afraid. I was never around so many people before and I have always been with my parents. I felt lost. I was lucky to meet people I already knew, it made it easier to adjust.
➢ It was big and couldn't find the right venue and did not know who to tell.
➢ I was not fully aware of my surroundings and thus felt very lost and confused. I am also a bit shy as there were a lot more people to interact with. This feeling did not last as I became more familiar with my surroundings and made more friends.
➢ I felt so naïve and so unprepared for everything I saw – before orientation and a couple of meetings with my mentor.
➢ Yes, it was a difficult moment in my life because I had to stand for myself without my parents.
➢ I did not know what to do as the campus was much bigger than I expected it to be so in way I was scared of the unknown.
➢ Actually I was very excited and very enthusiastic about entering a new level of study. I looked forward to meeting new friends, choosing my modules, etc. To me it was a new exciting venture coming from high school.

TABLE 4.23 (CONTINUED)

NEGATIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS IN THE FIRST WEEKS AT UNIVERSITY

➢ Nervous at times but most importantly I felt very bad because I knew that I wasn't going to do something that I like.
➢ I felt that university wasn't a place for people like me but for the help I received I didn't feel like that anymore.
➢ LOST!!!!!!!!!!!!!
➢ I was very insecure not knowing whether I will manage but now I am free.
➢ It was a whole new experience. It gave us many challenges.
➢ I was very excited but I was a bit unsure about what was going on. Lucky I was allocated a mentor who showed me around.
➢ I was sacred by the fact that everything is so huge and all of a sudden I had this freedom such as whether to attend lectures or not. However, it was difficult to meet people as everyone was afraid to be open.
➢ I felt that I was in the lost city and then during the end of the month I was used to a routine that was taking place every week.
➢ I felt nervous because of the courses that I do.
➢ Like a little fish in a big pond, but excited and motivated.
➢ Confused about environment.
➢ I felt fear in the first few weeks at the university as I didn't know anything that is done at university. I never had any friends during the first few weeks at the University. I had started knowing some people after a month as I came to university alone. Now I feel happy because I know some of the things that are part and parcel of life at university.
➢ I was very uneasy, a little sacred as I wasn't sure what I was getting myself into. But that soon changed with the help of my mentor.
➢ I was so scared but as time went on my mentor helped me get used to the university.
➢ The first few weeks I had mixed emotions (fear, confusion excitement). I had to learn that in university you have to do things for yourself. You have to learn independence. There was a good feeling of being treated like an adult and to make new friends.
➢ It looked like a big and lonely place.
➢ I was a bit scared. I expected the university to be a "school" where there was a "pecking order" towards the first year student yet at the same time I was excited since I have already left high school and attending the higher level of education.
➢ I felt out of place at first but I blended into the environment.
➢ I felt miserable because I have been separated from my parents for the first time in my life. Later I got used to the university and ended up finding it as interesting.
➢ First I was so confused, those long lines I have to wait on during registration, they made my life completely out of order. As time goes on I really feel at home when I met other students and mentor too. They made me feel at home.
➢ I felt like I am lost they put me in a place where there is chaos.
➢ I felt scared and maybe that is why I failed the first test. But that helped because I have to work under pressure.
➢ To be totally honest the first few weeks a university was like living a nightmare. I was so used to following a set sequence of events that university life was really chaotic for me. It was as if everyone seemed to be heading somewhere but with no sense of direction. I just felt like running away without taking a second look back. I hated being targeted and called a "fresher". It took the best part of a couple of months but I'm settling down slowly but surely.
➢ I felt lost because I did not know the place and nobody was willing or able to pay full attention when I needed help with something concerning the degree I am doing now.

TABLE 4.23 (CONTINUED)

NEGATIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO THE EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS IN THE FIRST WEEKS AT UNIVERSITY

➢ At first I felt confused and uncertain about a lot of things. But after I chose my mentor (SANELE) I felt like I belonged in this place. Everything is just perfect and she has a very good leadership qualities.
➢ I didn't feel the way I expected to feel, lost and isolated, but since the mentors were provided to help us in every step on our way.
➢ I felt like I was lost in some way or the other. I was afraid but my mentor was always there for me. She helped me to cope with university life. Without her I do not know what I would have done, I wouldn't be able to cope.
➢ Like I was in the middle of the world (the real world) with a few guidelines along the way (my mentor).
➢ I was having a low self-esteem, but with mentorship I gained my self-esteem.
➢ Everything was new to me but the next day it was much better.
➢ Excited but not very comfortable since I wasn't prepared.
➢ The first few weeks were hard because I had to organise financial problems and the lectures were continuing so I was kind of left behind. I had to get used to the crowd in the lecture theatre, the lecturer is quick, other students are making noise, it was hard but I think I managed. And the tests were hard. I can remember my first few weeks were hard but worth going through.

APPENDIX D5

TABLE 4.27

RESPONSES TO ACADEMIC, PERSONAL AND SOCIAL MENTORING

ACADEMIC MENTORING
➢ They give us tips.
➢ Because mentors teach us from their experiences.
➢ We are here for academic purposes and that is why academic mentoring is the **most** important.
➢ Education is a necessity.
➢ Is defined as helping the student cope with their academic workload, giving tips on how to study better, acting as a link between staff and students and helping students prepare for test and examinations.
➢ Academic mentoring helps students cope with the academic workload.
➢ Academic and personal stability are important to succeed. Social mentoring is not so important because people find this process themselves.
➢ I strongly believe that education is the most important aspect, I'd like being a friend to others and consulting others rather than worrying about myself.
➢ I have to get a degree so that I can make something of my life.
➢ To me academic mentoring is important because I intend passing.
➢ Because it deals with my behaviour rather than my values related to psychosocial life.
➢ The university is mainly related to studies however this is the place where you define yourself and become your own person.
➢ Academic mentoring is the most important because we as students come here to get an education so mentors must be well informed.
➢ My mentor has helped me cope with my academic workload and because of her, I am able to socialise with others with confidence.
➢ What is more important to me is my courses than other things.
➢ The academic has to be something I work out myself, and if help is needed I've got that friend to go to.
➢ The most important reason that brought me here is academic reasons and the rest just follows.
➢ Because my purpose here is to prosper.
➢ My mentor gives me tips on how to study better and also motivates me on how I should behave and perform in order to achieve my goals.
PERSONAL MENTORING
➢ You have to be mentored personally before you are mentored academically.
➢ I feel that we need a friend at university who we could go to when we have problems.
➢ As someone new to the environment you need someone to make you feel at home and make you understand how the university operates. You will also need someone who you will look up to.
SOCIAL MENTORING
➢ Social mentoring I believe is the most important because if your mentor is a friend, guide and role model they are able to tell you that your behaviour is tilting or you can speak to them about academic and personal things.
➢ The university is mainly related to studies however this is the place where you define yourself and become your own person.
➢ In my opinion social mentoring is the most important as the basis of success is **built** on a strong foundation.
➢ I believe that what and who I am (behaviour) is the first factor that is important.
A COMBINATION OF ACADEMIC, PERSONAL AND SOCIAL MENTORING
➢ I think that if the mentor instils values in a person then it will help them to study better and be more socially active.
➢ It is essential to know yourself through other people, your strengths, weaknesses and limitations, before you tackle your studies, as this forms the foundation of your academic performance. Forming close bonds with fellow students increases your self-esteem and confidence which in turn motivates your studies.
➢ Your mentor must befriend you before he can academically assist you.
➢ I did not know anyone when I came here and the thing I needed most was a friend, someone to talk to and who understand me. Academic mentoring comes next. It is a big gap from A-levels to university.
➢ I feel that your mentor should be your friend, who would understand you better. You should be able to approach him in times of difficulty including personal and academic difficulty.
➢ You have to be mentored personally before you are mentored academically.
➢ If your mentor is your friend, a role model or acts as a big brother/sister, they will most definitely give you academic information. One will be able to talk about anything whether academic or social. They will be able to even do some counselling.

TABLE 4.27 (CONTINUED)

RESPONSES TO ACADEMIC, PERSONAL AND SOCIAL MENTORING.

➢ If you need to be personally motivated and confident in order for you to tackle your academic work as well as the social life.

APPENDIX D6

TABLE 4.30

POSITIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME TO OTHER STUDENTS

➢ Mentors are a great help and everyone needs a mentor when coming to university.
➢ It helps a student to understand and know the whereabouts of varsity life. Also it helps the student settle down more easily.
➢ I think that it is a great system because it helps students adapt to the campus lifestyle.
➢ It allows students to ask questions only understood by fellow students. It is at this time that we become fully aware of the expectancies of higher education.
➢ Helps to relieve you of worthless stress by educating you on the reality of university life. It basically makes us less ignorant.
➢ It helps.
➢ It equips you and gives you more power to cope with university life.
➢ For first years because there is a big difference from where we come.
➢ Absolutely. Reason being that I know that it helped me a lot. It gave me a bond of support and aid and assisted me whenever in need of anything.
➢ It helps students get used to the university.
➢ They help us with many things and even petty things that other people might think are silly to ask about. And one also gets to know a lot of things on campus.
➢ To help them adjust.
➢ Because mentorship is good.
➢ So they can get help from different sources.
➢ They would need a mentor to adjust to campus life but at the same time, if they manage to socialise and make new friends there would be no real need for a mentor. When it came to getting to know my lectures, etc. my mentor was not really helpful.
➢ The mentors help a lot and they are always available when you need them. My mentor is very nice and it is always good to talk to her.
➢ It is one way of adapting to the university.
➢ Because it helped me develop into the student I am today. It gave me directives, helped me to guide myself around campus.
➢ Once you have a mentor, someone who has been through the initial experience of campus, you become more comfortable knowing that you are not alone and that there is someone there for you.
➢ The mentor helps you adjust to the huge change in lifestyle at university. Everyone needs someone who has had the same experience is mature and can help him or her by giving good advice and being a guide.
➢ Shows you where lectures are.
➢ Teaches us basics to survive academically.
➢ It helped me make the adjustment from school to university and the heavy demands.
➢ If it can help me it can help others.
➢ They show you a different approach to understanding your work.
➢ Without a mentor you are lost at university.
➢ It helps us cope with the university level.
➢ Because it helped me somewhere somehow.
➢ If you haven't been at university it is hard to cope, because you don't know how the lecturer works and even getting to different lecture halls.
➢ My mentor has taught me a lot about campus life and how to avoid certain situations.
➢ I can talk to him about anything.
➢ I do recommend the mentorship because it has helped me about how to deal with my studies.
➢ Because it is helpful even if you never understood anything in class. Your mentor can make it clear so that you can understand.

TABLE 4.30 (CONTINUED)

POSITIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME TO OTHER STUDENTS

➢ It is helpful.
➢ Helps to know and be on track as to what is going on.
➢ It helps a lot in the way you get to adjust in the university.
➢ Mentorship programme helped me to settle into university.
➢ My mentor was always there when I needed her.
➢ The mentors help the first year students and I as a first year student was not scared when I got my mentor because I could call her anytime I needed her. It is like having an angel on your side.
➢ It helps the student adjust to his or her environment.
➢ Yes it will help me as much as it helped me. You will have a support system.
➢ I will recommend it to other students because they will help them to know the campus and help them to communicate with others and have many friends.
➢ I am unsure because sometimes there is no use of it but they help (mentors) me first time I came to UKZN.
➢ It assists students in coping with being in the university.
➢ It helps us deal with our environment as well as our career.
➢ If it helped me I believe it can help anybody else.
➢ In my opinion it helped me a lot in terms of adapting etc.
➢ Because it helps.
➢ It helps students to cope academically and socially.
➢ I definitely would because the SMP was very helpful, as it helped me make the adjustment from school to university. Also one is able to gain valuable information.
➢ Because students do not have knowledge about the campus, how to motivate others and how to lead them.
➢ One's anxiety levels are reduced and one is made to feel more comfortable.
➢ The student mentorship programme helps one to become more responsible and to be more of a role model.
➢ If it weren't for my mentor, I wouldn't have really enjoyed being in this university. People always said that university life is mostly academically oriented which isn't true.
➢ Very helpful
➢ It is of good use to other people.
➢ They help us a lot. Our mentors are very understanding to our needs.
➢ Provides a great deal of help especially if this is your first year.
➢ If you are a first year student it helps you because the mentor explains all the things that are happening in the university.
➢ I learnt to know my mentor's language.

TABLE 4.31

NEGATIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME TO OTHER STUDENTS

➢ I don't know the main purpose of mentoring.
➢ My mentor is not always there.
➢ My mentor never helped me at all. After orientation he never organised another meeting to get our feedback, he was always with other boys and I felt awkward going to him.

APPENDIX D7

TABLE 4.32

FIRST MOST IMPORTANT THING MENTEES LEARNT FROM THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ Adapting to the university	17	24%
➢ Communication with different people	11	16%
➢ Building self-confidence	7	10%
➢ Understanding the demands and importance of courses	5	7%
➢ Coping academically	4	6%
➢ How to study effectively	4	6%
➢ Where to find resources	4	6%
➢ Time-management	4	6%
➢ How to get along with people	2	3%
➢ Responsibility and independence	2	3%
➢ Organisation	1	1.4%
➢ Self-presentation	1	1.4%
➢ To be friendly	1	1.4%
➢ Helpful	1	1.4%
➢ Sacrifice	1	1.4%
➢ Setting goals	1	1.4%
➢ Values	1	1.4%
➢ Social development	1	1.4%
➢ Group work discussions	1	1.4%
➢ Social mentoring	1	1.4%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**70**	**100%**

TABLE 4.33

SECOND MOST IMPORTANT THING MENTEES LEARNT FROM THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ Coping with the academic demands of university	9	16%
➢ Communication	5	8%
➢ Approaching people	4	6%
➢ Friendship	4	6%
➢ Academic information	4	6%
➢ Self-confidence	4	6%
➢ Independence	3	5%
➢ Finding resources on campus	3	5%
➢ Information on accommodation	3	5%
➢ Time-management	2	3.3%
➢ Information on funding	2	3.3%
➢ Mentees get role-models on campus	1	1.6%
➢ The way of doing research in the library.	1	1.6%
➢ Having a nice time with people of different races. Information about sports	1	1.6%
➢ Personal development.	1	1.6%
➢ How to become a leader.	1	1.6%
➢ Study tips	1	1.6%
➢ Study skills	1	1.6%
➢ Hard work	1	1.6%
➢ Teambuilding	1	1.6%
➢ Problem solving	1	1.6%
➢ What text-books to get	1	1.6%
➢ Purpose of education	1	1.6%
➢ Being unconditionally helpful	1	1.6%
➢ Adapting to a new lifestyle	1	1.6%
➢ How to ask for help	1	1.6%
➢ How to study	1	1.6%
➢ Motivation	1	1.6%
➢ Dedication	1	1.6%
➢ Responsibility	1	1.6%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**62**	**100%**

TABLE 4.34

THIRD MOST IMPORTANT THING MENTEES LEARNT FROM THE STUDENT MENTORHSIP PROGRAMME

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ Facilities and physical advantages of my current campus	5	8.5%
➢ Information about the daily routine on campus	4	6.5%
➢ To focus on my studies and goals and pay less attention to things that will not help me.	4	6.5%
➢ Acting as a link between staff and students	4	6.5%
➢ Support and respect for lecturers	3	4.8%
➢ Motivation as a whole	3	4.8%
➢ Expectations of different lecturers in terms of workload, tests, assignments	3	4.8%
➢ Self-confidence	2	3.2%
➢ Friendly	2	3.2%
➢ Always have a positive attitude	2	3.2%
➢ Helping each other and understanding each individual	2	3.2%
➢ Help reveal skills and abilities hidden inside oneself	2	3.2%
➢ Discipline within yourself	1	1.6%
➢ What to do and where to go for exam cards	1	1.6%
➢ What to do and where to go for exam cards	1	1.6%
➢ Encourage self-esteem for students	1	1.6%
➢ He helped me set the time-table	1	1.6%
➢ Easy to pass because they give tips on how to make study easier.	1	1.6%
➢ Money doesn't buy everything	1	1.6%
➢ Trust	1	1.6%
➢ Patience	1	1.6%
➢ Communication	1	1.6%
➢ To be proud of myself	1	1.6%
➢ To be honest	1	1.6%
➢ Time-management	1	1.6%
➢ Listening and taking down notes in class	1	1.6%
➢ Explained the significance of checking notice-boards all the time	1	1.6%
➢ Being able to set goals	1	1.6%
➢ That I can rely on someone	1	1.6%

TABLE 4.34(CONTINUED)

THIRD MOST IMPORTANT THING MENTEES LEARNT FROM THE STUDENT MENTORHSIP PROGRAMME

➢ Explain to me about my courses	1	1.6%
➢ Mentorship is about nation building	1	1.6%
➢ Importance of the DP and how it will affect me if it is poor	1	1.6%
➢ How to study efficiently	1	1.6%
➢ The functions of the university	1	1.6%
➢ People that can assist me in different subjects	1	1.6%
➢ I learnt about the library.	1	1.6%
➢ Solving problems	1	1.6%
➢ Importance of course outline – his views	1	1.6%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**58**	**100%**

TABLE 4.35

FOURTH MOST IMPORTANT THING MENTEES LEARNT FROM THE STUDENT MENTORHSIP PROGRAMME

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ Helping students for tests and examinations. Be helpful to others who need help. Someday you might also need help.	5	14%
➢ Improved my self-esteem and assertiveness	3	8%
➢ Be able to reach what seems impossible – setting objectives	2	5%
➢ Social integration and acceptance	2	5%
➢ Understanding	2	5%
➢ Information about the financial aid bureau	1	2.75%
➢ I learnt about the computer room.	1	2.75%
➢ Attending lectures everyday	1	2.75%
➢ Motivation	1	2.75%
➢ Be observant and always do tutorials	1	2.75%
➢ Listening	1	2.75%
➢ Introduced me to various activities regarding sport.	1	2.75%
➢ He told me how to change the curriculum.	1	2.75%
➢ Time management	1	2.75%
➢ Always smile that what I learnt from my mentor because she is always smiling.	1	2.75%

TABLE 4.35 (CONTINUED)

FOURTH MOST IMPORTANT THING MENTEES LEARNT FROM THE STUDENT MENTORHSIP PROGRAMME

➢ Explained the importance of attending lectures, ADP tutorials and practicals	1	2.75%
➢ Having a positive outlook on life	1	2.75%
➢ Self studying	1	2.75%
➢ How to study.	1	2.75%
➢ Time-table	1	2.75%
➢ Accessibility	1	2.75%
➢ Encourages us to pursue our dreams	1	2.75%
➢ Pressure in varsity life	1	2.75%
➢ Education is very important. Without it one doesn't have a hope in this world.	1	2.75%
➢ Provide past year papers and revise them with students.	1	2.75%
➢ Lecturer's expectations	1	2.75%
➢ The skills to get along or cope with university life	1	2.75%
➢ Self-reliance and self independence	1	2.50%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**37**	**100%**

TABLE 4.36

FIFTH MOST IMPORTANT THING MENTEES LEARNT FROM THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ Being a better person, being a better person is reward enough	2	6.66%
➢ Financial aid	2	6.66%
➢ He told me about the library orientation	2	6.66%
➢ Improve me in every way	1	3.33%
➢ How to improve my DP	1	3.33%
➢ Do's and don'ts when it comes to communicating with other 2nd and 3rd year students	1	3.33%
➢ Assist during orientation and during the academic orientation	1	3.33%
➢ More freedom	1	3.33%
➢ Time management	1	3.33%
➢ Co-ordination skills	1	3.33%
➢ The programme has given me confidence to even wake up every morning, delighted to go to campus	1	3.33%
➢ The importance of breaking your head over certain modules, e.g. Anatomy	1	3.33%
➢ They can give us reference for finding revision questions for exam preparation.	1	3.33%
➢ Explained how to look for and borrow a book	1	3.33%
➢ Be yourself	1	3.33%
➢ Studying harder	1	3.33%
➢ To organise the resources of my course	1	3.33%
➢ Reading for tests and examinations	1	3.33%
➢ To give guidance to those who need it	1	3.33%
➢ To understand concepts in discipline	1	3.33%
➢ I was able to improve my self-esteem	1	3.33%
➢ Build my confidence	1	3.33%
➢ Learnt about HIV-AIDS	1	3.33%
➢ Know the university	1	3.33%
➢ Communicate with other students and organise workshops	1	3.33%
➢ Able to cope	1	3.33%
➢ Explained how to look for and borrow a book	1	3.34%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**30**	**100%**

APPENDIX D8

TABLE 4.37

FIRST MOST IMPORTANT WEAKNESS OF THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ Mentors are not well informed with their jobs.	6	12.5%
➢ Free times clash with that of the mentor.	6	12.5%
➢ Not enough communication. I lost contact with my mentor after 2 months.	6	12.5%
➢ Not enough time to interact with mentor.	4	8.46%
➢ Most 1st year students don't make maximum use of this programme – not taken seriously.	3	6.25%
➢ Getting the venue – venue too far.	3	6.25%
➢ Mentors are not punctual.	2	4.1%
➢ Insufficient amount of mentors.	1	2.08%
➢ No link between SMP and the SRC.	1	2.08%
➢ Sometimes mentors are not there.	1	2.08%
➢ Speak other languages.	1	2.08%
➢ If you want a mentor and it is urgent it is difficult to contact them if they are not in the mentor room.	1	2.08%
➢ There was nothing to learn because my mentor never paid any attention to us.	1	2.08%
➢ No teaching of study skills.	1	2.08%
➢ Some students don't attend them and they are not punished.	1	2.08%
➢ Sometimes too demanding.	1	2.08%
➢ Personal skills are lacking.	1	2.08%
➢ Insufficient time for consultation.	1	2.08%
➢ Difficult to organise meeting times.	1	2.08%
➢ The place for consulting is small.	1	2.08%
➢ Vital aspects of the course/degree are not addressed by the mentorship programme.	1	2.08%
➢ There is no privacy.	1	2.08%
➢ Arrangements to meet with mentees should be done in a proper manner, as we did not meet mentors frequent enough.	1	2.08%
➢ They do not find previous examination questions.	1	2.08%
➢ There is a lot of noise.	1	2.08%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**48**	**100%**

TABLE 4.38

SECOND MOST IMPORTANT WEAKNESS OF THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ Some mentors do not arrive at their stipulated times.	2	10.5%
➢ Some cannot answer our questions.	2	10.5%
➢ Some people find it a waste of time; the programme should emphasise the importance of attending.	1	5.26%
➢ Mentees do not usually get along with each other.	1	5.26%
➢ Laziness of mentors.	1	5.26%
➢ They don't reveal too much about themselves.	1	5.26%
➢ Not a lot to learn.	1	5.26%
➢ No detailed information about how the mentorship programme works.	1	5.26%
➢ If your mentor is not there no one will try and help you except the officials.	1	5.26%
➢ Some do not care for their students.	1	5.26%
➢ Time-consuming.	1	5.26%
➢ Venue isn't big enough.	1	5.26%
➢ Workload prevents me from seeing my mentor.	1	5.26%
➢ Meetings are held once in 2 months, meetings are unplanned, mentors do not have set programmes for us.	1	5.26%
➢ There is no food.	1	5.26%
➢ Indifferent attitudes.	1	5.26%
➢ Place is too far.	1	5.26%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**19**	**100%**

TABLE 4.39

THIRD MOST IMPORTANT WEAKNESS OF THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ Always very hard and tired to concentrate.	1	14.3%
➢ Exams, tests are not tackled by mentors, strategies, coping skills.	1	14.3%
➢ J045 is small and far.	1	14.3%
➢ Disorganisation.	1	14.3%
➢ Mentors not available.	1	14.3%
➢ Some mentors do not report when they are not available.	1	14.3%
➢ Mentors are not able to help students in some modules.	1	14.3%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**7**	**100%**

TABLE 4.40

FOURTH MOST IMPORTANT WEAKNESS OF THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ Mentors do not report when they will not be available.	1	25%
➢ Male mentors ask female mentees out.	1	25%
➢ We need a white mentor. There is not a single white mentor. WHY?	1	25%
➢ At times no interest is shown to us.	1	25%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**4**	**100%**

TABLE 4.41

FIFTH MOST IMPORTANT WEAKNESS OF THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ Mentors do not report when they will not be available.	1	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**1**	**100%**

APPENDIX D9

TABLE 4.42

RESPONSES RELATING TO CHANGES MENTEES WOULD LIKE TO SEE TO THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ More commitment from mentors and mentees. Make the SMP really manifest its intended goal.	3	8.33%
➢ More pre-registration orientation.	2	5.56%
➢ Mentors must be taught about their jobs or responsibilities – be more informed.	2	5.56%
➢ I would like to see mentors introduce clubs societies and sports to mentees and generally more information on them. Regular activities between mentors and mentees.	2	5.56%
➢ Mentors should help students get access to past exam papers.	1	2.78%
➢ More time	1	2.78%
➢ Arrangement to meet all mentees to meet at certain times and a specified day should be done accurately. The mentors should be more involved with students. and lecturers. As some students are reserved and too shy to ask for help, **resulting in** poor academic progress.	1	2.78%
➢ Increase their salaries because these people are doing a wonderful job that cannot be compared to any other job. They really help me in a time when you are new and don't know what to do, where to go, they come of assistance. I don't know what first year students would do without them.	1	2.78%
➢ Be more organised.	1	2.78%
➢ Organise workshops for all courses.	1	2.78%
➢ Better communication skills.	1	2.78%
➢ I would like them to know better than us.	1	2.78%
➢ Mentors should be more responsible, they shouldn't do this job for the namesake but to help their fellow colleagues.	1	2.78%
➢ Recruit more mentors and make students more aware of their mentors and the role they play. Have more organised meetings.	1	2.78%
➢ More meetings should be set up; mentors should involve themselves on a more personal basis with each one of their mentees.	1	2.78%
➢ More mentees coming to see their mentors. More mentors allocated.	1	2.78%
➢ Mentors should give students a fully guided tour of the entire campus.	1	2.78%

TABLE 4.42 (CONTINUED)

RESPONSES RELATING TO CHANGES MENTEES WOULD LIKE TO SEE TO THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

➢ More mentors, smaller groups and more small group interaction.	1	2.78%
➢ It must be well advertised and not unrecognised by students.	1	2.78%
➢ Mentors and mentees should report when they will not be able to attend and a sanction for those who do not report.	1	2.78%
➢ Mentors should have cell phones in case we need to contact them urgently.	1	2.78%
➢ Mentors should try to work together in trying to help us	1	2.78%
➢ To choose people who know the campus, have skills of communication and can motivate others.	1	2.78%
➢ Much more involvement with students. The only time together is the first day.	1	2.78%
➢ Maybe an excursion or field trips so that mentor-mentee can get to know each other better.	1	2.78%
➢ More participation from first year students.	1	2.78%
➢ Computers to be in the place where mentors and mentees meet.	1	2.78%
➢ None, it should be done like this.	1	2.78%
➢ Must be more energised and ready to help mentees when help is needed.	1	2.78%
➢ Sports days, braais and competitions.	1	2.78%
➢ Provide extra tuition.	1	2.78%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**36**	**100%**

APPENDIX D10

TABLE 4.44

POSITIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO CONSIDERING BEING A MENTOR

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ So that I can help other first year students. I would love to help first years cope with university life. I want to help others feel settled and comfortable in varsity life. I would like to help first year students because I know how it feels to be a first year and am thankful for the mentorship. Because the way I have been helped would like to give it back to other people who need it most.	14	30%
➢ I would like to if I qualify.	1	2.13%
➢ OT workload. Although I feel that I am wise enough to be able to advise and assist fellow students.	1	2.13%
➢ I understand the difficult change from school to university.	1	2.13%
➢ I befriend people easily, I have been around the university (excellent orientation skills). I am a good teacher.	1	2.13%
➢ I like to assist others and communicate with different people.	1	2.13%
➢ Because I want to do to student what my students did for me.	1	2.13%
➢ I love working with people and helping them whenever the need arises, especially if I am more experienced in a certain category.	1	2.13%
➢ I also want to offer the good service they offered me.	1	2.13%
➢ Because I am a sociable person who likes talking, listening and helping people with all sorts of problems.	1	2.13%
➢ To bring change to SMP. I would like other students to look up to me as a role model and a "Mother Theresa" if I may say so, someone who will be there to help them every single step of the way.	1	2.13%
➢ Very exciting and challenging and I would be contributing to the future of UKZN.	1	2.13%
➢ Yes, because I was helped during my first year, I would like to give back what I received in the mentorship programme.	1	2.13%
➢ I would like to offer the same kind of friendliness and support and friendliness to others that my mentor offered to me.	1	2.13%
➢ Yes, I would not like another person going through the same thing I went through with my mentor.	1	2.13%
➢ Work with others and earn some money.	1	2.13%

TABLE 4.44 (CONTINUED)

POSITIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO CONSIDERING BEING A MENTOR

➢ I would like to share my knowledge and be someone's role model.	1	2.13%
➢ Because I realised that there is unskilled mentors.	1	2.13%
➢ Need to get more information about it.	1	2.13%
➢ Yes, I would like to pay back what they have done for me.	1	2.13%
➢ Because I get to know more people, making new friends and helping others and I will even get to know people, their attitude and their interest.	1	2.13%
➢ I can teach other students what my mentor taught me.	1	2.13%
➢ Maybe or maybe not, It is a lot of work however, you get to learn from other students personal or life experiences.	1	2.13%
➢ Because I would like to be a role model to someone.	1	2.13%
➢ I would enjoy making first years feel more comfortable with a new environment and I would like to help them through their problems.	1	2.13%
➢ I would make sure that I do my best to help my mentees especially academically.	1	2.13%
➢ Because I learnt a great deal form this programme and I would like to share my knowledge with others	1	2.13%
➢ I think they do hard work helping first year students.	1	2.13%
➢ Being a mentor I think you have to be active and responsible but I used to see other mentors as if they are not doing their jobs.	1	2.13%
➢ I would make sure that I do my best to help my mentees especially academically.	1	2.13%
➢ Because I learnt a great deal from this programme and I would like to share my knowledge with others	1	2.13%
➢ I think they do hard work helping first year students.	1	2.13%
➢ So that I could be a building block for other students in the future	1	2.13%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**46**	**100%**

TABLE 4.45

NEGATIVE RESPONSES RELATING TO CONSIDERING BEING A MENTOR

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ No, it is a tough job and only a person with patience and a good heart can do it.	1	12.5%
➢ I don't think I am up to that yet. As it is I haven't settled properly. I wouldn't make a good mentor.	1	12.5%
➢ Maybe or maybe not, it is a lot of work however, you get to learn from other students personal or life experiences.	1	12.5%
➢ I am really undecided.	1	12.5%
➢ Not sure if I could adjust my time so that I could see my mentees more often.	1	12.5%
➢ Because I don't have the skill of motivating others.	1	12.5%
➢ Not sure if I could reach out to students.	1	12.5%
➢ I don't know if I can handle time with people's problems (consulting) and my time.	1	12.5%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**8**	**100%**

APPENDIX D11

TABLE 4.46

FIRST BEST QUALITY EXHIBITED BY THE MENTOR

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ Friendly	10	12.82%
➢ Communicates well	10	12.82%
➢ Kind	7	8.97%
➢ Approachable	6	7.69%
➢ Helpful with studies	6	7.69%
➢ Honesty	6	7.69%
➢ How to achieve academic objectives	6	7.69%
➢ Self-esteem	2	2.56%
➢ Confident	2	2.56%
➢ Assertiveness	2	2.56%
➢ Responsibility	2	2.56%
➢ Independence	2	2.56%
➢ Punctuality	2	2.56%
➢ Understanding	2	2.56%
➢ Loyalty	2	2.56%
➢ Caring attitude	2	2.56%
➢ Organisation	2	2.56%
➢ Time-management	2	2.56%
➢ Assisting with the exams	2	2.56%
➢ Very open and comfortable to talk with	1	1.28%
➢ Good link between me and other students.	1	1.28%
➢ Funny	1	1.28%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**78**	**100%**

TABLE 4.47

SECOND BEST QUALITY EXHIBITED BY THE MENTOR

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ Friendly	8	12.70%
➢ Kind	8	12.70%
➢ Helpful with everything in life	6	9.52%
➢ Motivation	4	6.35%
➢ Concerned and caring	4	6.35%
➢ Communicates well	3	4.76%
➢ Helpful with studies	3	4.76%
➢ Ability to listen	2	3.17%
➢ Tolerant	2	3.17%
➢ Punctual	2	3.17%
➢ Open	2	3.17%
➢ Reliable	2	3.17%
➢ Polite	2	3.17%
➢ Responsible	2	3.17%
➢ Easy to understand and approach	1	1.59%
➢ Give us some previous question papers	1	1.59%
➢ Has a good attitude	1	1.59%
➢ Informative	1	1.59%
➢ Found an indoor soccer team	1	1.59%
➢ Made me adapt to university	1	1.59%
➢ Able to give advice	1	1.59%
➢ Intelligent	1	1.59%
➢ Hardworking	1	1.59%
➢ Has knowledge of my degree	1	1.59%
➢ Answers some of my questions	1	1.59%
➢ Leadership	1	1.59%
➢ Patient	1	1.59%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**63**	**100%**

TABLE 4.48

THIRD BEST QUALITY EXHIBITED BY THE MENTOR

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ Helpful	8	15.1%
➢ Friendly	6	11.32%
➢ Communication	4	7.55%
➢ Caring	3	5.66%
➢ Kind	2	3.77%
➢ Integrity	2	3.77%
➢ Understanding	2	3.77%
➢ Sincere and sweet	2	3.77%
➢ Intelligent	2	3.77%
➢ Responsible	2	3.77%
➢ Academic assistance	2	3.77%
➢ Courage	1	1.89%
➢ Makes me feel comfortable	1	1.89%
➢ Polite	1	1.89%
➢ Ability to counsel	1	1.89%
➢ Have many friends	1	1.89%
➢ Man that I would like to be	1	1.89%
➢ Role model	1	1.89%
➢ Helps us evaluate the good and also the bad things	1	1.89%
➢ Help me get to know others	1	1.89%
➢ Offers good quality advice and is witty	1	1.89%
➢ Taking things step by step	1	1.89%
➢ Making use of opportunities	1	1.89%
➢ Well-organised	1	1.89%
➢ Funny	1	1.89%
➢ Interested	1	1.89%
➢ Supportive	1	1.89%
➢ Protective	1	1.89%
➢ Trustworthy	1	1.89%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**53**	**100%**

APPENDIX D12

TABLE 4.49

FIRST WORST QUALITY EXHIBITED BY THE MENTOR

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ Not punctual	5	21.74%
➢ Lacks confidence	3	13.04%
➢ Difficulty in communicating	3	13.04%
➢ Does not keep in touch with mentees	2	8.70%
➢ Never paid attention	1	4.35%
➢ He is not able to build relationships between mentees.	1	4.35%
➢ Treats it as a duty.	1	4.35%
➢ Not very enthusiastic about the mentorship programme.	1	4.35%
➢ Unreliable	1	4.35%
➢ Inconsiderate	1	4.35%
➢ Very talkative	1	4.35%
➢ Lazy compared to others	1	4.35%
➢ Sometimes not informed	1	4.35%
➢ Spends too much time on one subject	1	4.35%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**23**	**100%**

TABLE 4.50

SECOND WORST QUALITY EXHIBITED BY THE MENTOR

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ Disinterested	2	25.%
➢ He is more for himself	1	12.5%
➢ Being absent without a report	1	12.5%
➢ Panic	1	12.5%
➢ Playful	1	12.5%
➢ See her once a month	1	12.5%
➢ Treats it as a duty	1	4.35%
➢ Not very enthusiastic about the mentorship programme.	1	4.35%
➢ Unreliable	1	4.35%
➢ Inconsiderate	1	4.35%
➢ Very talkative	1	4.35%
➢ Lazy compared to others	1	4.35%
➢ Sometimes not informed	1	4.35%
➢ Spends too much time on one subject.	1	4.35%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**23**	**100%**

TABLE 4.51

THIRD WORST QUALITY EXHIBITED BY THE MENTOR

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ Not responsible	1	33.3%
➢ Sometimes unsure	1	33.3%
➢ Not enthusiastic	1	33.4%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**3**	**100%**

APPENDIX D13

TABLE 4.53

POSITIVE RESPONSES ON THE POTENTIAL OF THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME TO IMPROVE THE PASS RATE

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ They help us when we need help.	2	3.92%
➢ Concentrate and be aware of important aspects.	2	3.92%
➢ A mentor might help you with academic work but you yourself should put in the effort to study and be determined to study.	1	1.96%
➢ They assist when student experience problems in their modules and that counts a lot when we prepare for our tests.	1	1.96%
➢ Students get help from mentors and if they cannot help they refer you to someone else.	1	1.96%
➢ The mentor encourages you and helps you with the work as they have done it themselves.	1	1.96%
➢ Yes, by mentoring students as early as possible, it can help avoid unnecessary waste of time and confusion therefore allowing one to adjust early and perform better.	1	1.96%
➢ Many times students learn more from their peers and mentors offer different and easier ways to study, which will enable the student to pass.	1	1.96%
➢ The mentor helps you understand your work and also gets past year papers.	1	1.96%
➢ SMP helps students adjust as long as the mentor puts in the effort and truthfully dedicates themselves to the role that they have chosen to play.	1	1.96%
➢ Because mentors help in solving problems.	1	1.96%
➢ If students aren't afraid of asking questions they can learn what may help them in their tests.	1	1.96%
➢ If we have any problem they are willing to help and whenever I meet my mentor she always asks me if everything is fine academically. If I have any problem she will help me.	1	1.96%
➢ Through the SMP, one has exposure to the study field.	1	1.96%
➢ Because if you haven't heard what the lecturer said you will get help.	1	1.96%
➢ If the job is done right, there will definitely be a positive response.	1	1.96%
➢ During consultation we can share our academic problems.	1	1.96%
➢ You can get help from 3 different sources.	1	1.96%
➢ Very helpful with finding past year papers and providing help when needed.	1	1.96%

TABLE 4.53(CONTINUED)

POSITIVE RESPONSES ON THE POTENTIAL OF THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME TO IMPROVE THE PASS RATE

➢ Mentors connect us with other mentors	1	1.96%
➢ Do what the mentor teaches you and you will pass.	1	1.96%
➢ My mentor makes sure we understand tutorials and shows us ways to learn for tests.	1	1.96%
➢ Since mentors have experience they can get you the resources you require in order to adapt.	1	1.96%
➢ Because they help us practice past papers	1	1.96%
➢ Yes, because it acknowledges the subjects you do not understand.	1	1.96%
➢ It gives students tips on learning their books and the ability to cope with their workload.	1	1.96%
➢ They can help mentees with their weak subjects and also help them obtain past year papers.	1	1.96%
➢ Helps students to cope with the university lifestyle.	1	1.96%
➢ It helps with any problems that we do not understand as well as improve our work rate.	1	1.96%
➢ Mentorship is about academic progress.	1	1.96%
➢ Mentors are always there to encourage us, especially on our work and we could always look up to them.	1	1.96%
➢ Students would not feel so alienated and thereby bunk lectures.	1	1.96%
➢ Mentors also help students academically and it also helped me improve my test results.	1	1.96%
➢ Mentors do help with past year papers and how to go about answering questions.	1	1.96%
➢ If mentors understand their responsibilities	1	1.96%
➢ With a mentor like Sanele, you actually look forward to coming to the campus because she tells us different methods of learning.	1	1.96%
➢ They assist us academically.	1	1.96%
➢ Yes, they explained difficult things to us.	1	1.96%
➢ Helping where the student lacks the knowledge.	1	1.96%
➢ Because if I have a problem in the course my mentor tries to explain it to me and if he fails we go to somebody else to have that explanation.	1	1.96%
➢ Yes, because it has improved my results especially in BMG.	1	1.96%

TABLE 4.53(CONTINUED)

POSITIVE RESPONSES ON THE POTENTIAL OF THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME TO IMPROVE THE PASS RATE

➢ As the mentors are to be experienced students, chosen to help others. They should offer advice on how to study (better study methods) for certain subjects and maybe even tutor a little as they have done the same thing in most cases.	1	1.96%
➢ Because we get all the help academically from our mentors.	1	1.96%
➢ They act as tutors and lecturers if necessary.	1	1.96%
➢ Because mentors can give you support and guidance on what you need to know and also know where we can get revision questions for the exams.	1	1.96%
➢ Students adapt more easily on campus because they do not have to worry about acceptance.	1	1.96%
➢ I see mentors as they are not only concerned about our studies but they are concerned about our behaviour and showing us lecturers and study halls.	1	1.96%
➢ A student can be motivated or not – up to them.	1	1.96%
➢ People should have it in themselves that that they want help.	1	1.96%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**51**	**100%**

TABLE 4.54

NEGATIVE RESPONSES ON THE POTENTIAL OF THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME TO IMPROVE THE PASS RATE

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ Not many students are aware of their mentors, therefore they are unassisted.	1	16.67%
➢ Because I don't see how they can improve the student pass rate.	1	16.67%
➢ It has nothing to do with exam studies.	1	16.67%
➢ I really cannot respond to that.	1	16.67%
➢ Our mentor hasn't really shaped us up/made a difference to our studies, meetings are rarely held, and because of a full timetable we cannot accommodated time to meet up with them.	1	16.67%
➢ I do not know it will depend on us as students.	1	16.67%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**6**	**100%**

APPENDIX D14

TABLE 4.56

POSITIVE RESPONSES ON THE POTENTIAL OF THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME TO IMPROVE RETENTION

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ They have to be with us most of the time.	1	6.67%
➢ There is always someone out there who understands and knows your problems.	1	6.67%
➢ Talking from experience.	1	6.67%
➢ Enjoyable.	1	6.67%
➢ They feel more welcome by their interaction with the mentorship programme.	1	6.67%
➢ Because my mentor helps in many things.	1	6.67%
➢ The choice to stay at university is up to the individuals themselves and as to how much they want to study.	1	6.67%
➢ Because mentors always give us the attention we want.	1	6.67%
➢ Most of us look forward to seeing our mentor because of her smile.	1	6.67%
➢ If the mentors put a little fun in learning, everybody will be willing to participate. Everything	1	6.67%
➢ Sometimes if you do not pass all your courses, it is likely recommended that you consult your mentor, so as to get a solution to your problem.	1	6.67%
➢ It helps motivate students.	1	6.67%
➢ The SMP encourages one to fulfil the course requirements.	1	6.67%
➢ It is helpful to us as students.	1	6.67%
➢ If students feel there are people to care for, guide them, help solve their problems, they will be more dedicated to their studies.	1	6.67%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**15**	**100%**

TABLE 4.57

NEGATIVE RESPONSES ON THE POTENTIAL OF THE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME TO IMPROVE RETENTION

Description of response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
➢ Does not affect their decision to be on campus or not.	1	11.11%
➢ Because I do not know how other students feel.	1	11.11%
➢ They probably could or probably not.	1	11.11%
➢ Because if the students see the need to leave the campus they leave.	1	11.11%
➢ Students can manage without them.	1	11.11%
➢ I really do not know.	1	11.11%
➢ It is their choice.	1	11.11%
➢ Up to students to have a belief in them.	1	11.11%
➢ Irrespective of the SMP if the student decided to stay on campus they will.	1	11.11%
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**9**	**100%**

APPENDIX D15

TABLE 4.59 A NARRATIVE RESPONSE ON THE EXPERIENCE OF MENTORING

➢ It was not good having a mentor because there was some conflict between us the mentees and the mentor and he was not able to help us get along again.
➢ SMP opened my eyes in every aspect of my career study and life as well.
➢ I love the mentorship programme and it should continue every year.
➢ My experience with the SMP is a very positive one because it helped me to learn a lot. It allowed me to open up. It made me a better person. And improved my learning skills and has improved my academic progress.
➢ It gives me help in my courses. I get to know more. It has improved my communication with other people.
➢ My mentor was really helpful but my friends' mentors were unhelpful and do not even check up on mentees. Some mentors cannot even lend past test papers as they sold them.
➢ This programme gave me a mentor that was very helpful and always there to assist me in times of need.
➢ It is good because it helps most of the first year students to know the university well so it must carry on. Also helps them in their studies as well.
➢ I found this programme to be very helpful and supportive. It enabled me to adapt to my new surroundings. I found myself making new friends through the process. I learnt more about the university and learnt new ways to learn the study material thus making learning simpler.
➢ There is nothing wrong with the programme but the mentors should be responsible and if they take on this task, they should do it to the best of their ability.
➢ It has helped me but not in all subjects.
➢ The mentors are like second teachers and second parents because they know all tertiary life and they will guide new students to be careful about things happening in life.
➢ This programme has helped me a lot because I have already passed my test (first test) of the semester. Will this programme continue so that others will benefit from it?
➢ Mentorship should improve a little. Their real job is during orientation. They have to be more creative, especially on skills on tests and courses. So mentorship programme (my view) is sometimes useless.
➢ I like this mentorship programme because it gives me the confidence to cope with the workload. It gives me some tips about to learn for exams as well as tests for continuous assessment.
➢ I enjoy the mentorship programme. It has helped me and continues to help me. I would like to be a mentor someday myself.
➢ I really enjoyed being with my mentor, we even got to know her better. She was so, so, so friendly and I feel comfortable around her. I feel that I can tell her anything, even my personal life. She is so great.
➢ It has helped me a lot with getting to know the school.
➢ Mentors are good people who really help first year students on their problems regarding knowledge.
➢ I think it is a great programme because you actually socialise with others and learn their culture. I actually obtained an "A" in my first test (Psychology) because I wanted to be like my mentor.
➢ My experience is that this programme is helpful and it makes you see where you are going.
➢ It was good to us all the way.
➢ The programme of mentorship makes the students see the difference between school and university. It is helpful to us as first year students.